

GENERAL GRAY - What actually happened then was that CIA wrote up all the concepts, we in the JCS got them on an evaluation basis, and the State Department got into the act very informally still later.

GENERAL TAYLOR - The Zapata Plan was apparently put on paper and approved sometime after the 15 March meeting. Was a field order ever put out on it?

[REDACTED] - This was a rush order after several alternatives had been discussed. I don't know if the JCS ever got a detailed plan, as we worked and reworked this until just before the operation.

GENERAL TAYLOR - As I understand it then, the concept was okayed by the President, and the detailed plan was worked over for a period of time and finished just before the operation. When was the plan for the landing approved?

MR. BISSELL - The President approved successive steps as we prepared for this, but up until D-1, he reserved unto himself the final decision to go or no go, and up until this time, D-1, he could have diverted the expeditionary force from landing, even though it was on its way.

GENERAL TAYLOR - Was there ever an affirming order given to go ahead?

ADMIRAL BURKE - My records show that 1340 hours on the 16th of April was the time that we received the green light.

GENERAL TAYLOR - This was just before the landings which were to take place the next day.

GENERAL GRAY - The first time the new administration came into this was at a 27 January meeting at the White House.

MR. KENNEDY - I attended that meeting, and there was never any discussion of that plan. I do remember that Secretary Rusk brought up the fact of a possible landing on the Isle of Pines.

GENERAL GRAY - That's right. They merely discussed the seven possible courses of action, ranging from straight volunteer forces to straight U.S. overt intervention. We were told to prepare plans for all of these possible courses of action in ascending scale of difficulty.

MR. KENNEDY - One thing sticks in my mind in regard to this meeting. I remember that at that time, we were told that it would be impossible to successfully overthrow Castro because of his control over his armed forces and over the country in general, unless you had the invading force backed up by intervention by U.S. forces.

(At this point, 1440 hours, General Taylor was called to the telephone where he talked to McGeorge Bundy at the White House, who informed him that he had not, as yet, seen the President.)

GENERAL GRAY - At this time, we prepared a plan for the Joint Chiefs of Staff which was approved by them and sent to the Secretary of Defense, stating that the U.S. needed an over-all national plan of action and the paper then listed all possible seven courses of action.

GENERAL TAYLOR - The Trinidad Plan and the Zapata Plan had not as yet been crystallized then.

GENERAL GRAY - Not as far as we knew.

GENERAL TAYLOR - As I understand, this need for a national plan of action which you were bringing up, what you are really doing is raising a procedural point.

GENERAL GRAY - On the 27th of January, the President was briefed on the Trinidad Plan, and he was also told that the JCS had not reviewed it, and he directed that they do so.

MR. KENNEDY - That 27 January briefing did not address an operational plan, as such. It was very ethereal.

GENERAL GRAY - I do know that on the 28th of January, we were asked to review the Trinidad Plan.

MR. BISSELL - My notes from that meeting indicate that we asked for authority to continue the build-up of a strike force and that we also go ahead with political and propaganda actions that were underway. We did not mention geography, but my notes do state that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] detail plan would be evaluated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

GENERAL TAYLOR - That does seem to agree then.

GENERAL GRAY - We were given the Trinidad Plan on the 31st of January and we briefed the Chiefs on the 3rd of February. I would like to read the conclusions which were approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(At this point, General Gray read from JCSM-57-61, dated 3 February 61, and its attachment which was a military evaluation of the CIA Para-Military Plan - Cuba. A copy of this document will be made available in the file. General Gray read all seventeen conclusions made by the JCS and several of his conclusions were interrupted by comments and questions. Following his statement of conclusion No. 6, that the airborne assault should be successful, inasmuch as it was highly improbable that it would be opposed, General Taylor stated:) -

GENERAL TAYLOR - I'm surprised to hear that. I wouldn't have bet a nickle that it would work.

GENERAL GRAY - Don't forget that this is the Trinidad Plan and not the Zapata Plan.

(Later, in referring to Conclusion No. 11, that it would take the Cuban Army until D/2 to move substantial forces to the beachhead area, even without interference from the air or from guerrillas, General Gray stated:) -

GENERAL GRAY - The intelligence that was given to us indicated that the nearest Castro military unit was a regiment situated about 100 miles away, and we were also told that the regiment was not concentrated at Santa Clara, but it was scattered throughout the area with the militia. Another thing that had not been developed by CIA, we did not know of the political pressure and advance publicity that would be needed in order to successfully surface this revolutionary government.

GENERAL TAYLOR - I don't understand your reference to advance publicity that was needed.

GENERAL GRAY - It was necessary in order to build up public acceptance of the provisional government and its leaders.

[REDACTED] - This was done out of Miami and New York and we had a terrible time with it.

[REDACTED] - The first knowledge that the Cubans had of the actual operation was on the night of 14 April, just before the D-2 air strikes, when Barnes and I talked to Cardona. I told him that every time I had given his council information, there had been a leak; and I pointed out that inasmuch as his son was going [REDACTED] there, he should keep quiet. He said that he would not tell anyone.

GENERAL TAYLOR - I guess that all this hoopla in the press made this operation just that much harder.

GENERAL GRAY - Yes, though this is not an excuse. I don't think it had any effect on the actual military operation.

MR. BARNES - None of us anticipated the reaction by the press, particularly by that Miami press during the period when the U.N. was hearing Roa's complaints. All sorts of guesses were printed, including one which had the right date for the operation. Notwithstanding, we did move our people from our training area to the port, and onto the ships without the dope getting out.

^{Samoa}
GENERAL GRAY - Simosa put a very effective clamp on in Nicaragua. (At this point, after reading through the thirteenth conclusion that the Cuban Army could eventually reduce the beachhead, General Gray stated:) - In our view we thought that the invasion forces could hold the beachhead about seven days. (On reading the fifteenth conclusion that a decision of the execution of this operation must be made by D-21, General Gray stated:) - This decision was made at that time, but the President reserved the right to stop the operation at every meeting which was held up to the day before the actual landing. (General Gray then read from the sixteenth conclusion in regard to the fact that ultimate success would depend on political factors, that is a sizable popular uprising or substantial follow-on forces.)

GENERAL TAYLOR - I don't quite see what you mean by follow-on forces and your follow-on support. The time capability which we give for these forces to hold the beachhead for a period of only seven days would not allow for this.

GENERAL GRAY - That's right. This should have been planned for. It was just about this time that ██████████ began to sound out the other Latin American governments in regard to their support of this operation.

██████████ - We also had an additional 300 people in the Miami area who were to be flown into Nicaragua and embarked.

██████████ - Yes, we actually flew about 162 of these out of Miami.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

GENERAL CABELL - We committed some of these people in advance rather than deliberately holding them off in order to have a follow-on force in training.

GENERAL GRAY - The militia in this area of the island were reported to be friendly to the guerrillas. Therefore, we figured that Castro would have to go clear back to the west end of the island in order to get any effective militia to send against the invading forces.

(General Gray then read the last conclusion which stated that despite the shortcomings, the Joint Chiefs of Staff considered that timely execution of the plan had a fair chance of ultimate success and even if it did not achieve immediately the full results desired, it could contribute to the eventual overthrow of the Castro Regime.)

GENERAL TAYLOR - This was the JCS evaluation of the Trinidad Plan.

GENERAL GRAY - Yes Sir.

MR. KENNEDY - Did I understand you to say earlier that your answer as to the possible degree of success of this plan was 30/70?

GENERAL GRAY - Yes Sir. This was a general numerical guess made in a discussion with General Wheeler. I heard others saying that the chances might be 40 to 60, which is the highest guess that I heard. I might point out that at about the time of this evaluation paper, Ambassador Willauer faded out of the picture and we began to have meetings with [REDACTED] group.

GENERAL TAYLOR - Did they get into the military aspects of this?

GENERAL GRAY - No. Mostly the political aspects.

[REDACTED] - One briefing on the Trinidad Plan was given to the [REDACTED] group about the second week of February.

GENERAL GRAY - About the 24th of February the Joint Staff Team went to Guatemala to evaluate the military effectiveness of the CIA-Cuban Volunteer Task Force. ~~ULTRA SENSITIVE
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(At this point, General Gray read from JCSM-146-61, dated 10 March 1961, a memorandum for the Secretary of Defense by the Joint Chiefs

of Staff in regard to the evaluation of the CIA-Cuban volunteer task force. This document with attachment will be made available in the file. After reading some of the more specific conclusions in the evaluation, General Gray concluded by stating the general JCS conclusion that from a military standpoint, since this small invasion force will retain the initiative until location of the landing is determined, the plan could be expected to achieve initial success. Ultimate success, however will depend on the extent to which the initial assault serves catalyst for further action on the part of anti-Castro elements throughout Cuba.)

GENERAL TAYLOR - This was the Joint Military Team's evaluation of this Cuban force.

GENERAL GRAY - Yes. The team went down there to check the training, the combat effectiveness, and the logistics capabilities of this volunteer force, and they were favorably impressed. Colonel Tarwater, for example, felt that the pilots were very well trained, though he said that they should practice making successive passes on ground targets. Now to move along to the Zapata Plan. At the 11 March meeting, the President asked for a plan to be prepared which would be less spectacular in execution, and therefore more plausible as an essentially Cuban operation. CIA made up several alternative courses of action, which we heard of on the 13th of March. My staff evaluated it and the JCS reviewed it on the 15th of March and submitted their conclusions to the Secretary of Defense. On the 16th of March, these conclusions were presented to the President.

MR. BISSELL - Do you want to mention the alternative concepts, one of which was the Zapata Concept?

GENERAL GRAY - I believe that only three of the seven alternatives were deemed worthy of serious consideration. Some of the other alternatives, for example, dealt with landings on islands near the Isle of Pines. **ULTRA-SENSITIVE**

MR. DULLES - It was felt that such landings would have little impact on the main island of Cuba, as any rebel sympathizers who wanted to join up could not do so unless they swam out to the island.

ADMIRAL BURKE - The three alternatives we considered were: first, a modification of the Trinidad Plan; second, a landing at Preston on the northeast coast; and third, the Zapata Plan.

GENERAL GRAY - The JCS conclusions stated that the Zapata Plan was the most feasible of the three alternatives and the one most likely to accomplish the objective. However, it was also stated that none of the alternative concepts were considered to be as militarily feasible and as likely to accomplish the objective as the original plan, that is, the Trinidad Plan. We thought that with effective air strikes laid on prior to the landing, and with tactical air support available during and after the landing in order to keep the area secure, it would be possible to keep the Cuban forces from getting into the beachhead area. As you will note from my chart, once this evaluation of the alternative concepts was made, the Joint Chiefs of Staff started to get into the operational business, that is of support and logistics.

GENERAL TAYLOR - You say that the evaluation was approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

GENERAL GRAY - Yes Sir.

(At this point, General Gray was reading from the conclusions in JCSM-166-61, dated 15 March, a memorandum from the JCS to the Secretary of Defense, subject: "Evaluation of the Military Aspects of Alternate Concepts, CIA Para-Military Plan - Cuba". A copy of this document with the Appendices will be made available through the file.)

GENERAL TAYLOR - You say that the Joint Chiefs felt that this plan was not as feasible as the original plan?

MR. KENNEDY - Is that question accurate? Wouldn't it be right to say that the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved this concept?

ADMIRAL BURKE - There is no paper which says that. However, inasmuch as the JCS did not disapprove this concept, it does imply approval, even though there were many factors and reservations that were taken into account.

MR. BISSELL - I have some notes here which were written by [redacted]

[redacted] about the 16th of March, which compares the advantages

and disadvantages of the two plans. His final phrase is, "The Trinidad Plan promises more decisive results but at greater risks." One might say that the Zapata Plan had lesser initial risks but it could be expected to achieve less decisive results. This was because you would expect less opposition to the landing force in this area, and because the approaches to the beachhead area were not as good. At the same time, night landings here would register less of a shock on the Cuban populace, and it would be more difficult for the guerrillas and volunteer recruits from the general public to get into the beachhead area to join up with the landing force.

GENERAL TAYLOR - At no point then, were the JCS asked, "Do you recommend doing it?" I understand now that they only were asked to comment in regard to the several alternative courses.

ADMIRAL BURKE - That is true. However, where we possibly did make a mistake, is in the fact that we did have an opportunity to say that we thought this plan was not feasible and we did not say so.

GENERAL GRAY - The conclusions stated that we did think the concept or plan was feasible.

ADMIRAL BURKE - That's true, even though we did have reservations.

GENERAL TAYLOR - No one ever said flat out to you, "Do you recommend doing it, and if not, do you have a better plan?"

MR. DULLES - These plans were exposed and discussed in high-level meetings, and this question was asked.

ADMIRAL BURKE - One difficulty here was that General Lemnitzer was by himself at these meetings.

GENERAL GRAY - I was with him at several of these meetings.

MR. DULLES - One thing we mustn't forget is that we were all interested in having this plan turn out to be a success. Not enough emphasis has been placed here on the alternatives that faced us. We either had to go ahead or we had [REDACTED] these people, and to the world, it would have meant that we were not behind these people who were trying to overthrow Castro.

ADMIRAL BURKE - Also, just at this juncture, we were in between administrations, and no one was too sure of his ground. In retrospect, we should have formalized this thing earlier and in detail. We should have had more work done on the plan, and it should have been worked over carefully and scrupulously as is usually done. This we did not do, both because of the time factor and because it was so closely held.

GENERAL TAYLOR - All of these plans seem to contain the critical assumption that there would be an uprising by the Cuban populace. Was this ever discussed?

ADMIRAL BURKE - We did discuss it in the JCS.

MR. DULLES - We didn't count on this so much in the Zapata Plan; whereas the Trinidad Plan was more of a shock treatment which might have brought the Cuban people around to our side. The later plan was not taylored to this, and it was far quieter. Perhaps Castro might have played down the landing instead of blowing it up. As a matter of fact, he only blew it up when it was rather evident that he had licked the invading force.

MR. KENNEDY - Then what was the objective of the operation?

MR. DULLES - Get a beachhead, hold it, and then build it up.

MR. KENNEDY - How could you possibly do that - take a thousand or fourteen hundred men in there and hold the beachhead against these thousands of militia? (At this point he addressed Admiral Burke.) When you thought that this was a satisfactory plan, did you understand that these fourteen hundred men could maintain their position there several weeks, even though there wouldn't be an uprising?

ADMIRAL BURKE - No. I understood that there would be one of two choices. First, if there was no serious opposition, the landing force might hold the beachhead. Secondly, if there were opposition and they could not hold it, they would slip through and become guerrillas.

[REDACTED] - We had a call from our agents saying that if we would give them arms, they would go with us, otherwise they were being called up to the Cuban militia and would have to go.

GENERAL TAYLOR (Addressing General Gray) - Would you repeat again what you said in regard to the feasibility of this plan to accomplish the objective? Also, was a new concept ever written to replace the one of March 17th?

(In answer to this question, General Gray read the mission of the Task Force as delineated in the Zapata Plan. Admiral Burke then showed JCSM-166-61 to General Taylor, who read the following extract: "Alternative III has all the prerequisites necessary to successfully establish the Cuban Voluntary Task Force, including their elements in the objective area and sustain itself with outside logistic support for several weeks. However, inaccessibility of the area may limit the support anticipated from the Cuban populace.")

GENERAL TAYLOR - I think that the JCS were not predicated success, at least for several weeks, on an uprising by the Cuban populace.

GENERAL CABELL - Support by the Cuban populace was meant to be the recruits who would infiltrate into the area.

(At this point, General Taylor read several other recommendations from JCSM-166-61, and then stated:) -

GENERAL TAYLOR - The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommendation still seems to be a choice between these three alternatives, but they still state that the Trinidad Plan was preferred.

MR. BISSELL - It still seems to me that if we could have held the beachhead area for a period of several weeks, our aircraft in working them over, could have first knocked out Castro's microwave lengths and forced him to open-voice communications so that we would have known more about them; and secondly, we could have resupplied our units and the guerrilla units; and third, at the rate recruiting in the United States was going on, we could have sent in reinforcements to the tune of about 500 men with minimum training. Of course, we would have had to assume that we would have knocked out Castro's air force.

GENERAL GRAY - Following the 16 March decision that the Zapata Plan should be pursued, the Interdepartmental Working Group was set

up, and on the 22nd of March we finalized an agreed list of tasks. For example, the State Department had to define what recognition of the provisional government meant. This delineation of agreed tasks was useful and helped much. On the 28th of March, the JCS approved a letter of instruction to CINCLANT and CINCONAD; and CONAD's plan, "Southern Tip", was implemented to improve the air defense of our southern-states area. We also had to work out rules of engagement for our naval forces as the carrier, Essex, and seven destroyers provided escort for the Cuban expeditionary force ships.

GENERAL TAYLOR - Did they have authority to attack Cuban forces?

GENERAL GRAY - They could attack Cuban aircraft if they had open bomb bays or they were actually starting an attack. However, if such an engagement did take place, we were then supposed to divert this force to Vieques Island, although some people thought that the Cubans would not divert, but would insist on going in for the landings. I might add that the rules of engagement were changed several times as the operation proceeded. On the 12th of April, the "Southern Tip" Plan was implemented and we were in an operational status. We also developed two logistic support plans, one overt and one covert. The covert had several phases. First the landing phase, D to D+3. Secondly, the buildup phase, D+3 to D+30. During this phase, the CIA had their plan built up to quadruple the size of their force to about 5,000 men and we had to estimate the numbers of weapons carriers, jeeps and other equipment that would be necessary. Thirdly, we had the D+30 and ON Phase, where we assumed that these forces would have popular support, and we could gradually go to overt logistic support of the operation. We had arms packs for 30,000 guerrillas in addition to CIA plans for a 5,000-man force. This equipment was actually assembled at Anniston, readily available and packs for 15,000 actually were loaded on ship. We also had mobile equipment which was being assembled at Anniston. We also considered the possibility of another ~~large American country~~ ~~large American country~~ recognizing the provisional government before the date, and if we would then covertly support these forces through this third

government. Beyond that, we had an overt phase, wherein the provisional government was recognized after its people had gone into Cuba. Here a military logistic advisory group would assist the volunteer Cuban forces in providing sustained logistic support, and then following the stabilization of the new government with diplomatic representatives re-entering Cuba, it envisaged the establishment of a military aid program through DOD. I have omitted mention of the fact that we had a U.S. Army field-type hospital set up and ready to go to Vieques.

GENERAL TAYLOR - How did you figure on evacuating casualties?

GENERAL GRAY - We could get them out by air.

MR. BISSELL - We thought that we could do this after H⁺4.

GENERAL GRAY - We also had a War Room set up in the Joint Staff area with all messages exclusive from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Admiral Dennison and the task force commander, or from them to me. Though the messages from Washington had to be relayed to the Cuban expeditionary forces' shore through these channels and it was cumbersome, I don't think that you could say the operation failed because of organization.

GENERAL TAYLOR - Don't you think that withholding all this from the staff was an impediment?

GENERAL GRAY - I don't think so, but it took a lot of the time of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

ADMIRAL BURKE - There are always a lot of delays involving anything from a half hour, to one to three hours; and these delays, mostly due to communications, could be fatal. If we had had a naval commander of the task force there, he could have made instantaneous decisions. I found myself writing a message to my naval task group commander, telling him what to do if he was under fire from the beach. What in the hell was I doing writing this in Washington?

GENERAL GRAY - I don't say that this was the way to do it, but I don't think that you could say that faulty organization defeated the operation.

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ADMIRAL BURKE - I agree with that.

GENERAL GRAY - If we had had an interdepartmental setup, charged with the responsibility of coming up with a concept and with an over-all national plan, and then had presented it in writing each time to the President, I think there would have been less confusion as to just what was approved at the end of this operation.

MR. BARNES - That couldn't have been achieved because of the way this operation developed. Though we had a fairly definitive plan in Trinidad, after that we just couldn't do it as we kept changing our plan because of political considerations and changes in the ground rules.

ADMIRAL BURKE - That's where we made a mistake I think. We should have drawn up a paper stating our concept, our mission, our tasks, our requirements, the status of the plan, etc. The way this developed, General Gray had to come to me with all sorts of questions. For example, what we could use the carriers for? Whereas if we were working under an agreed concept, he would not have had to do so.

MR. BISSELL - Many actions that came up involved the political considerations of importance. For example, at one time in the operation, a decision was made to authorize Navy jets to give protection to our B-26s when they came in to give close ground support, at least for a limited period of time. This involved a high-level decision and also amounted to a reversal of the policy that had been made that no U.S. forces would be overtly engaged. It's hard for me to see how this could have been worked out in advance.

GENERAL TAYLOR - It depends on what you mean by the use of the word "concept". I don't think that any changes were actually made in the concept.

ADMIRAL BURKE - That task which Bissell just discussed was laid on after we were told that the carriers would get out of there so that Castro's air force wouldn't be there. ~~OPERATION~~ the decision was made to launch aircraft for beachhead cover, it was pretty late.

GENERAL GRAY - If we had had an agreed-on national plan, it would have forced us to different conditions for our rules of engagement, and to different employment of our tactical air. I think that the rules of engagement should have been in the over-all plan, and not in our plan, or CIA's plan, or CINCLANT's plan.

GENERAL TAYLOR - How is it possible to keep from tying the hands of our military men by these political considerations?

GENERAL GRAY - By having all the departments participate in the planning from the very beginning.

[REDACTED] - And by having this over-all plan signed as approved by the President.

GENERAL GRAY - Once we got the State Department in on the agreed tasks, I was surprised in that Braddock took care of every one of them. Until then, it had been difficult to get them to do anything. Another mistake, lies in the fact that we said at the beginning we should have war-gamed this operation, yet when it got to be an approved plan, the CIA was going flat out, racing the clock, and I found that it was impossible to stop them even for a day in order to do this.

GENERAL TAYLOR - What factors caused this rush?

GENERAL GRAY - First, we were trying to beat the rainy season. Second, there was also the matter of the jets. We'd had information that the Cuban jet trainees in Czechoslovakia were coming back.

[REDACTED] - Also the President of Guatemala told us to get out of the country by early March, and we had about 1400 men there.

GENERAL GRAY - American newsmen were also getting into the act. (At this point, there was some discussion over a message that Admiral Burke received from McGeorge Bundy in regard to the reception and interrogation party at Vieques. This was terminated when General Taylor declared:) -

GENERAL TAYLOR - As far as I know, this Vieques' business is now a concern of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the CIA.

MR. DULLES - I don't think that [REDACTED] you should get mixed up in that. (Following this, there was some discussion on this position of the

[REDACTED]

personnel and equipment of the Cuban Expeditionary Force. At the end of this discussion, General Taylor stated:) -

GENERAL TAYLOR - For our own purposes, it would be useful to screen these people and get the best of them somewhere near here where we could interview them.

(At 1618 hours, [REDACTED], one of the "American contract pilots, entered the room, accompanied by [REDACTED].)

GENERAL TAYLOR - We're trying to find out what can be done to improve operations of this type in the future.

[REDACTED] - I'm prepared to answer questions from a resume which I have.

[REDACTED] - Your resume has not been circulated.

(At this point, [REDACTED] read from a resume which he had prepared, a copy of which will be made available for the file. Among his pertinent observations was that sufficient preparation had not been made for effective target study by the B-26 pilots; also that they were not permitted to use napalm on the B-26s which the Planners had considered to be an extremely useful munition. He felt that as a recompense, they had been authorized to employ 8 B-26s rather than 5 B-26s on the initial strike, although there were 14 B-26s available operationally for launch.)

[REDACTED] - Why weren't all of the operational aircraft launched?

[REDACTED] - Permission was not given by Headquarters.

MR. DULLES - On D-2? There's another reason for that, which I will go into later.

[REDACTED] then stated that debriefing of the crews after the first air strike on the 15th showed that at most, only fifty per cent of the enemy's air capability had been destroyed. The strike was rescheduled for Sunday, and napalm called for again, and again permission for its use was refused. He also stated that while he was getting constant calls for air protection on the beachhead on the 17th of April, Headquarters confused the issue by a call for further requirements for airfield target strikes, and in the resulting confusion, three or four critical hours were lost.

[REDACTED]

Eventually, he said we wound up with split forces, trying to cover both the beachhead and enemy airfields. [REDACTED] stated that the plan as he knew it, had been changed a 180 degrees, in that they were originally supposed to use 100 per cent of their operational capability for strikes at the enemy airfields in an effort to neutralize Castro's air force, and also to hit his microwave communications.)

[REDACTED] - What were your orders on D-Day morning?

[REDACTED] - We were ordered to put two aircraft each on the two airfields near Havana, and one aircraft each on the airfields near Guantanamo. However, the order to go from 5 to 8 aircraft came in late and it pushed the crew briefing so that they did not have proper target study before the mission. After D-Day it was obvious they had not destroyed the enemy's air capability and there was uncertainty from there on in on the location of the Cuban Air Force's aircraft. The enemy were "turning around" their aircraft in a very short time at their airfields.

GENERAL TAYLOR - What was your "turn around" time?

[REDACTED] - We had 7 1/2 hours between our times over target which usually amounted to about 30 minutes. About 2 of this 7 1/2 hours was spent on the ground and the rest in flying to and from the target area. We had very good ground maintenance, and armament people.

MR. KENNEDY - Were these Americans or Cubans?

[REDACTED] - These were mainly Americans though we did have some Cubans. The Americans were greatly influenced by General Dossiter, who had pulled these people into the operation and who had excellent control over them.

([REDACTED] stated that he had felt exactly what Castro had put into words, that the first air attack only served to make Castro angry and also gave him time to rally his forces.)

GENERAL TAYLOR - You mean the pause after the D-2 air strikes until the actual landings?

[REDACTED] - Yes.

([REDACTED] then stated that some of his crews had reported ragged naval air cover over the beachhead area. There had been some

confusion as to whether the cover was friendly or enemy, inasmuch as there had been reports that Castro's air force was using MIGs.)

GENERAL TAYLOR - Did they have U.S. Navy aircraft over the beachhead?

ADMIRAL BURKE - Only in the later stages of the operation.

GENERAL CABELL - Permission was given for them to cover the beachhead area for one hour at dawn of D/2.

GENERAL TAYLOR - Did you debrief all of these crews?

[REDACTED] - Not all of them. I started off with the B-26 pilots and then went to the C-54 and C-46 crews as they could report more because of the nature of their piloting operations. I debriefed them for the purposes of intelligence.

[REDACTED] then stated that in his opinion the erratic reports of naval intervention may have served as an asset in the air battle, but as far as the Cuban Volunteer Force was concerned, we had given them something and then had taken it back. A complete cover by naval air was never established.)

MR. KENNEDY - Had you or these pilots expected to have this aid or cover?

[REDACTED] - We were never briefed so.

MR. KENNEDY - Did you ever expect it by inference? Were you ever told that you would NOT get it?

[REDACTED] - I don't think they ever definitely said that they would NOT get it to the pilots.

MR. KENNEDY - Did you expect such aid?

[REDACTED] - No Sir.

MR. BISSELL - On the early morning mission of D/2, the pilots were briefed to expect naval air protection. They might have expected that protection after that.

ADMIRAL BURKE - Do you know if they were briefed that they would get naval air cover for one hour after dawn on D/2?

[REDACTED] - Yes Sir.

(At this point, [REDACTED] went back to reading points from his prepared resume. He pointed out that if they had not had the assurance of naval air cover over the area on the morning of D/2, they would not

have put American crews in the aircraft. That morning, the 19th, because of lack of Cuban crews, they had scheduled four American B-26 crews. One American crew was shot down that morning, and one was chased off by T-33s. The commander of the second element of the B-26s tried to contact the naval aircraft and when he could not, he elected not to penetrate the coast and he turned back from his mission when he was 35 miles out to sea. One [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] crewmember observed another American crew in a B-26 go into the sea after it was shot down at 1200 ZULU during the period when they had been promised naval air cover.)

MR. DULLES - Did any of your people see any MIGs?

GENERAL CABELL - They've already said that they would have liked to authenticate that, but they couldn't, that it remained only conjecture.

(At this point, [REDACTED] stressed one point very emphatically, that he thought that one lesson that could be learned was in regard to the inability of the Cuban crews to do an effective job under tough combat conditions. He pointed out that when the going was easy and morale was high, they did a good job, but that by the end of the operation, when things were very difficult, it had been almost impossible to get them into the air at all.)

GENERAL TAYLOR - Why was this naval air cover only to be over the beach for this one special hour?

ADMIRAL BURKE - They didn't want them to be over the beachhead area for a long time, picked up and attributed to the United States. However, because of the serious troubles the landing forces were in, they did want them over the area at first light to protect this first air strike.

[REDACTED] - One of our pilots reported that on the road west of Blue Beach that there were an estimated 20 large Russian tanks, and some 50 to 60 trucks. Three of our B-26s made passes on the trucks before they could stop and have the men climb out.

GENERAL TAYLOR - When was this? **REF ID: A6582**

[REDACTED] - On D+1, I think.

MR. BISSELL - That was Tuesday afternoon.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] - If we hadn't hurt them badly, they would have moved right on down into the landing area.

MR. KENNEDY - Could you tell where the fighting was going on? (At this point, [REDACTED], at the chart depicted where targets had been seen at points above Blue, Green, and Red Beaches.)

[REDACTED] - They moved in tremendously quickly into the area.

GENERAL TAYLOR - Where did they report that flak from?

[REDACTED] - They reported flak from all around the area. The Cubans seemed to have excellent coverage and seemed to know what they were doing.

GENERAL TAYLOR - How were the aircraft directed? From the ground by radio?

[REDACTED] - No, this wasn't possible as the communications went down with the ship that was sunk. They did land an aircraft on the strip and try to do some controlling with their radio. We then tried to have other aircraft land, but the Cuban pilots' fuel control procedures were bad and they had to turn back.

MR. KENNEDY - You say then that you did not find the Cuban pilots to be very good?

[REDACTED] - No. When the chips were down and the going was tough, they found excuses NOT to do the job.

MR. KENNEDY - What percentage would you say did do their job?

[REDACTED] - I'd say that not over 35 per cent of them did.

[REDACTED] - In our early missions, we had some Cuban crews making as many as three passes over heavily defended targets.

[REDACTED] - That was in the early days when they smelled victory. When the going got tough, we had trouble even getting them into the aircraft. On D/2, it took us several hours to get some of their crews in the aircraft, and then they aborted the mission.

ADMIRAL BURKE - When our pilots were over the beachhead on the morning of D/2, they couldn't find any enemy infantry at all.

MR. KENNEDY - Can you tell us where the fighting took place?

[REDACTED] - I'm getting into an area I really cannot answer.

MR. KENNEDY - You say that they had tanks and trucks west of Blue Beach?

[REDACTED] - On D-Day morning, there were Cuban tanks hitting our troops on Red Beach.

GENERAL TAYLOR - Were there any attempts made at marking lines by smoke or other means? How did your aircraft know that they were not hitting your own troops?

[REDACTED] - On our missions in the beachhead area, we were preoccupied with heavy equipment targets. We did not try to put any fire on troops. We always had heavy equipment targets when we were in the area.

MR. KENNEDY - How long did our people last on Red Beach?

[REDACTED] - It only seemed to be a matter of hours. The DZs where we dropped by C-46s did not seem to be compromised, so there was spasmodic fire in one or two areas. I don't think they knew that we were going in there.

MR. DULLES - I'd like to get more clear your statement on confusion in regard to orders. I didn't think that you had any question at all in regard to going after airfields on D/2.

MR. BISSELL - We did get authority the previous night to strike airfields at dusk, even though we knew that our aircraft were heavily committed. As I recall, we authorized strikes at airfields at dusk that night.

MR. DULLES - That mission was not carried out.

MR. BISSELL - That's correct Sir. The crews were tired by then, and the ones that did go in, could not identify the San Antonio targets in the haze.

[REDACTED] - Our orders to execute the strikes were so different from what we had been told that we would do, that when I saw the orders that we were calling off the war, I really thought we were trying to lose it intentionally, though I didn't say anything aloud in regard to this.

TOP SECRET//
REF ID: A65011

([REDACTED] left the conference room at 1700 hours, and General Taylor called an executive session of the committee at this time. The general meeting adjourned at 1701.)

[REDACTED]

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 11

Natl. Archives Review Committee, 6/21/78

By JK NARS Date 6/27/78

25 April 1961: Third Meeting

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DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 11652, Sec. 11
Wk. Archive Review Committee 6/21/71
By JK NARS, Date 6/22/71

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

PARAMILITARY STUDY GROUP MEETING

AT CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25 APRIL 1961

1000 HOURS

PRESENT

GENERAL TAYLOR

MR. KENNEDY

MR. DULLES

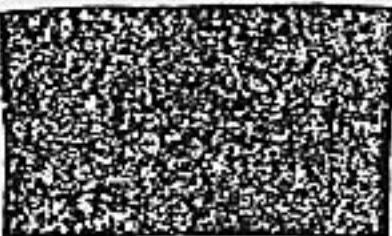
ADMIRAL BURKE

GENERAL CABELL

GENERAL GRAY

MR. BARNES

MR. MOORHOUSE



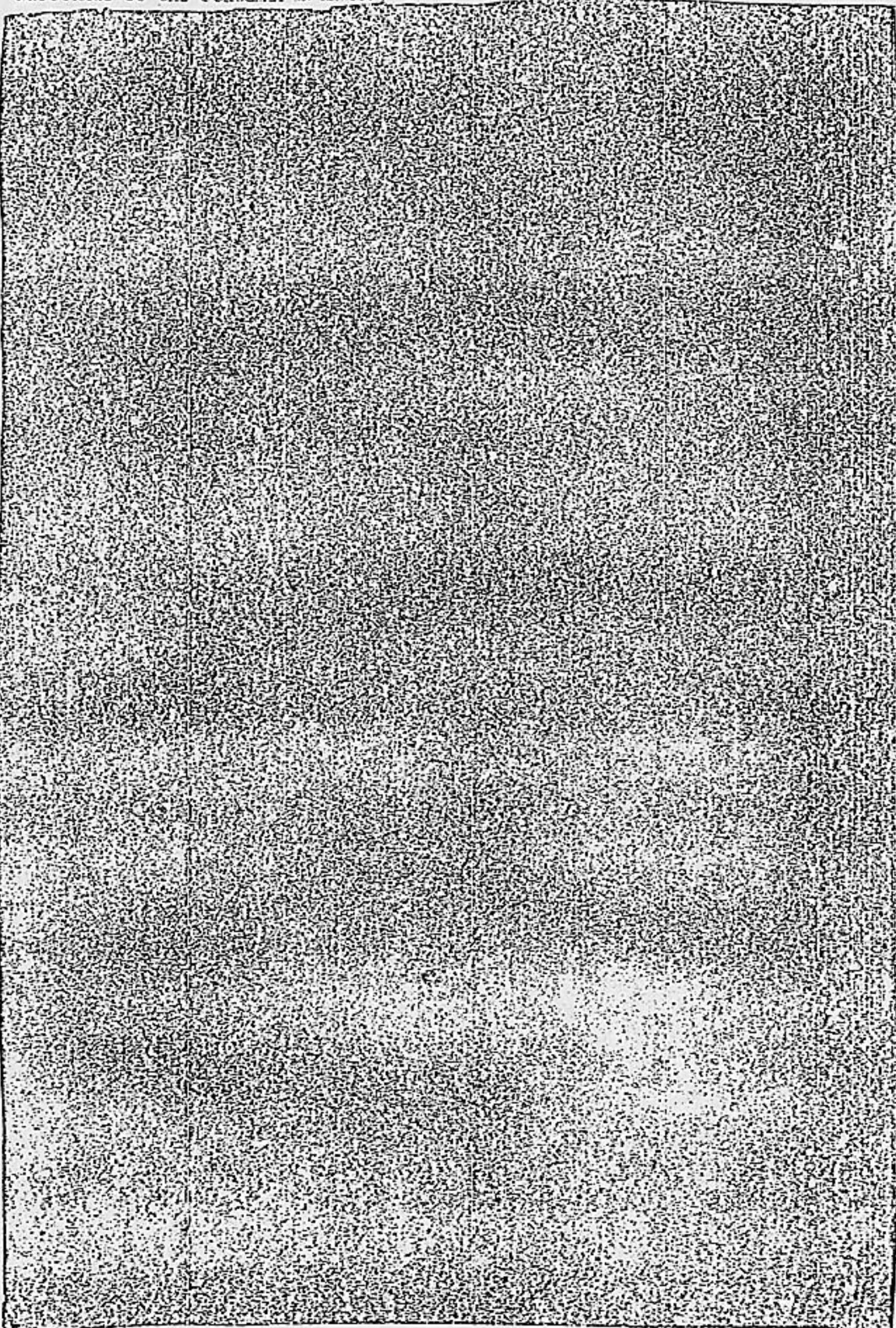
MR. KING

COLONEL INGELIDO

LT COLONEL TARWATER

COMMANDER MITCHELL

(The following notes are not representative of the general
opinion of the stakeholder, but represent the general
substance of the stakeholder's note.)



STATEMENT: One of the greatest problems encountered in developing this force was the difficulty in getting the Cubans to sublimate their petty differences for the common good.

STATEMENT: One fact that misled our estimate of the opposition we would meet was that prior to the Zapata Operation there has never been a pitched battle before between Cubans.

REQUEST: That all professional military people involved [REDACTED] in training the force be identified.

RESPONSE: CIA indicated this would be provided.

QUESTION: At some point would it be desirable to have the conclusions of all key people involved in the operation.

ANSWER: Yes.

REQUEST: General Taylor requested a re-briefing on the Air Plan and further information on the reported air ammunition shortage.

RESPONSE: CIA indicated this would be provided.

REQUEST: General Taylor requested the reconstitution of the intelligence that influenced the decisions, this to be presented in such form as to indicate the decisions influenced.

At this point [REDACTED] briefed on the actual operation. He prefaced his remarks by pointing out that the information on which his report was based was limited and incomplete.

When the 15 April air strikes were originally considered it was suggested that they be conducted for two days without restriction. However, due to political considerations it was decided to conduct limited strikes on D-2 and limited strikes on dawn of D-Day. It was decided to use two B-26 aircraft against each of three airfields on which all Cuban tactical aircraft were based, San Antonio de los Banos, Campo Libertad, and Santiago de Cuba.

Reconnaissance flights on 8, 11 and 13 April indicated the Cubans had 36 combat aircraft although many of these were not operable. Consequently it was decided to increase the aircraft in the air strikes from six to eight with one additional aircraft assigned as a spare.

The D-2 air strikes were planned to destroy Castro's combat aircraft on the ground. It now appears that these air strikes destroyed all of Castro's tactical aircraft except for two Sea Furies, two B-26s, and three to four T-33s.

Opinions were expressed generally favoring the view that if the D-Day air strikes had been conducted as originally planned all of Castro's tactical aircraft would have been destroyed or at least eliminated to the extent that the invasion force could have survived.

It was pointed out that all but eight or nine operable aircraft had been destroyed and that four of these were eliminated on D-Day by the invasion force.

The question was raised as to why the T-33s had not been destroyed. Several possible answers were given, including the restriction against the use of napalm, self-imposed by CIA, and the possibility that the aircraft on one runway had not been attacked.

QUESTION: Were you surprised at the effectiveness of the T-33s.

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: What led to the decision to conduct air strikes on D-2.

ANSWER: The strikes were timed to coincide with Nino Diaz landing in the Oriente and it was desired to tie the air strikes in with the defections.

STATEMENT: We knew before the landing that Castro retained operational operational tactical aircraft.

QUESTION: Why were limitations placed on the air strikes.

ANSWER: In order to reduce the appearance of a major military operation which would indicate U. S. involvement.

STATEMENT: It is a mistake to focus primary attention on one particular decision. We were operating under the very clear instructions to make this operation appear as one the Cubans could conduct without gross U. S. assistance.

STATEMENT: It was not one decision or one thing that caused failure, but many things.

STATEMENT: In covert operations of this kind political considerations always outweigh the military, with a consequent erosion of the military capability to the point that the operation becomes militarily infeasible.

STATEMENT: This raises one of the vital considerations before this Group, the conflict between the desire for political acceptability and military effectiveness.

STATEMENT: The point was made that political considerations must be given their due weight, but if this results in making the operation militarily infeasible the President should be advised that the plan is no longer feasible. He cannot be expected to remember all the details of a plan nor the significance of one seemingly minor change in a military operation.

STATEMENT: The President had frequent consultations with military representatives.

STATEMENT: The DOD was not consulted in the decision to call off the air strikes.

STATEMENT: It is dangerous to conduct meetings where military advice is required when only one officer from one service is present. This was the case during six or eight meetings.

QUESTION: Were the D-Day air strikes previously approved?

ANSWER: The paper setting forth the air strikes was passed around at the April 12th meeting. This paper made clear that there would be air strikes, but not an all-out effort. However, this document was only passed around at the meeting, read and considered by some, and collected after the meeting. It is doubtful if the President read it or understood the details.

QUESTION: What led to the cancellation of the air strikes.

ANSWER: At 1300 Sunday it was understood that the plan, including the air strikes for dawn of D-Day, had been approved. At about 7:00 P.M. CIA representatives were called to Mr. Rusk's office. He was concerned over the apparent defection of two rather than one B-26 and an additional cargo plane because he felt these additional defections had caused him to mislead Mr. Stevenson. At 10:30 P.M. the CIA tactical commander was advised that the air strikes had been called off. He most strongly urged that this decision be reconsidered and reversed. In debating the air strikes question and in discussing the action to be taken to strengthen

Mr. Stevenson's position, the President was contacted. In discussing the air strike question the President said he wasn't aware that there were going to be any air strikes on the morning of D-Day. At 2315 D-1 Mr. Rusk announced that there would be no dawn air strikes. At this time the invasion ships were within 5,000 yards of their landing beaches and it was physically impossible to call off the ~~strikes~~.

QUESTION: Was a strong position on this issue taken with Mr. Rusk.

ANSWER: Probably not strong enough. It was indicated that the worst would be that the invaders would not have their B-26 support and if the ships were ~~on their way~~ out the force would be denied its resupply capability.

QUESTION: At the 12 April meeting were the air strikes an issue.

ANSWER: No, the plan appeared to have jelled.

STATEMENT: There were only verbal instructions. These were not written, signed directives and the only papers that were available were fuzzy. The issues were never clearly resolved.

STATEMENT: I understood there was to be one final briefing involving all the participants and setting forth the entire plan. This was never done. Had this briefing been held the ultimate decisions might have been different.

STATEMENT: After cancellation of the air strikes an attempt was made to minimize the probable damage. At 0400 D-Day a CIA representative contacted the State Department to see if the Navy's protective CAP could be extended from the 20-mile limit to 15 or preferably a three-mile limit. The State Department objected and the President, in attempting to prevent U. S. attribution, confirmed that the Navy's protective CAP limit would not be changed. He did approve, however, ~~EW~~ support. Prior to this Presidential determination an alerting order had been sent to CINCLANT and he had turned his force around to be in a position to provide CAP and EW support if so ordered.

By the time it became apparent we would not receive air CAP we sent out a message to put the troops ashore and move the ships out to sea.

The brigade troops commenced landing at Blue Beach at 0100.

0300 - The CARIBE had completed unloading.

0330 - The troops unloading from the ALANTICO were under fire.

0430 - Troops landed at Blue Beach.

0600 - First LCU ashore.

0630 - Enemy air attacks against shipping and Blue Beach commenced.

0640 - Friendly aircraft arrived.

1730 - Three LCUs had discharged vehicles and tanks.

0825 - Castro T-33 shot down by BLAGAR.

0930 - RIO ESCONDIDO hit and sunk. Crew members rescued and put aboard BLAGAR.

- Brigade reported airstrip ready for use.

1000 - Continuous enemy air attacks against withdrawing ships.

1130 - Brigade reported only four hours ammunition left.

During the Blue Beach landings the HUSTON proceeded up the Bay led by the BARBARA J. They sent a reconnaissance team ashore and it was immediately attacked from the west flank. Two hundred seventy men did land in the vicinity of Red Beach. However, going ashore they saw lights from what appeared to be a construction project which they had not been previously aware of, and when they got ashore they ran into an enemy force estimated to have 800 troops and 12 tanks.

As the HUSTON was proceeding out of the Bay it was hit by a bomb and the ship went aground with approximately 130 personnel aboard.

As regards the airborne landing little detailed information is available. However, all the aircraft returned safely reporting that the troops had jumped over their intended landing places. Furthermore, reports indicate some of the airborne personnel were occupying their assigned positions.

During the course of D-Day the decision was made to conduct night air attacks against San Antonio de los Banos and Campo Libertad in an attempt to destroy Castro's air capability. The value of these attacks was negligible.

Also during the night of 17-18 April three air drops were made at the landing beaches. One landed in the drop zone, one in the sea, and one drifted inland.

On D+1 at about 0730 the 2d Battalion reported it could not maintain its position without air support for more than 30 minutes.

0824 - The Brigade Commander reported that Blue Beach was under attack by 12 tanks and four jet aircraft. The need for ammunition and supplies was repeated.

1010 - Red Beach wiped out.

1200 - Blue Beach under attack by MIG-15s and T-33s, out of tank ammunition, and almost out of small arms ammunition.

1600 - ESSEX reported long line of tanks and trucks approaching Blue Beach from East.

Enemy air attacks and shortage of ammunition continued to be reported for the rest of the day. Ammunition and food were air-dropped on the airstrip. On the afternoon of D+1 three friendly B-26s intercepted a column of enemy tanks and trucks, causing 1,800 casualties. At this point it was emphasized that the over-all plan had been based on control of the air and this action was cited as evidence of what the B-26s would have been able to accomplish if the air plan had succeeded.

1800 - 1st Battalion reported under heavy artillery attack.

2000 - The Brigade Commander was advised that he would be evacuated after dark. He replied saying, "I will not be evacuated. We will fight to the end here if we have to."

During the night of 18-19 April Navy CAP was again requested and permission was granted for one hour air CAP between 0630 and 0730. These aircraft were issued instructions to defend the invasion force from enemy air attack, but not to attack ground targets.

[REDACTED]

When it came time for the friendly forces to launch their air strikes the Cuban air crews were either exhausted or demoralized by the lack of air cover, consequently American crews were dispatched. One American crew was shot down during the period of Navy air cover and another was shot down when air cover was not provided.

At 0600 on the 19th of April enemy air strikes commenced. From 0710 to 1430 the enemy was closing in and the Brigade Commander was sending frantic appeals for air cover. Finally at 1430 he sent his final message saying, "Am destroying all equipment and communications. Tanks are in sight. I have nothing left to fight with. Am taking to woods. I cannot wait for you."

QUESTION: What sort of anti-tank equipment did the force have?

ANSWER: A number of 3.5-inch bazookas; five tanks; two 75 mm recoilless rifles; and an undetermined number of anti-tank mines.

STATEMENT: In considering the possible reasons for the shooting down of the B-26 during the period of Navy air CAP it was suggested that the rules of engagement may have unduly restricted the Navy.

QUESTION: What specific intelligence got to the President?

ANSWER: NIEs, intelligence annexes and briefings.

STATEMENT: It would be desirable to examine the ground rules and determine the price we paid to try and keep within political limitations.

STATEMENT: It appears this operation was simply too big to remain covert.

[REDACTED], head of Air Operations for the CIA, briefed (TAB-A) on air aspects of the operation. His position for this operation was coordinate with [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was his chief deputy for this operation. [REDACTED] had a staff of 14 people working on this operation in Washington. Except for the security, administration and cover people the personnel assigned were [REDACTED]. The actual training site in Guatemala was run primarily by [REDACTED] with a force of 20 people.

The point was made that one of the greatest procedural difficulties resulted from the physical separation of the air staff from the rest of the planners under [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] stated that he had 316 personnel at Puerto Cabezas, of whom 159 were Americans. The Cuban crews were recruited in Miami from 92 personnel that were screened. From these personnel they recruited and/or developed 17 B-26 crews and five C-46 crews. As far as the concept of air operations was concerned the concept varied very little from the beginning. The primary effort was being directed toward eliminating the enemy air force and to provide close support. On the 13th of April the photos indicated that Castro's combat aircraft were located on three airfields. On D-2 eight aircraft were committed against these fields with the results previously mentioned. It was pointed out that the B-26s had been the primary concern and the capability of the T-33s hadn't been appreciated as it wasn't believed that these aircraft were armed.

By late afternoon of D-1 photos indicated that instead of dispersing his aircraft Castro had concentrated them at San Antonio de los Banos.

After the cancellation of the dawn air strikes on D-Day the pilots were briefed to provide close support for the invasion force with at least two aircraft over the beach at all times. Thirteen missions were launched on D-Day in providing close support to the invasion force and in protecting against hostile vessels.

That night six B-26 aircraft were launched against Cuban air-fields. However, two aircraft aborted on take-off and the others were not able to identify their targets due to haze.

On D+1 six aircraft were scheduled in support of the beach-head. On the night of D+1 two aircraft got off and struck San Antonio de los Banos. On Wednesday morning two B-26s were committed again and two more were lost.

In summary there were 13 strikes on D-Day, four on D-Day night, six on D+1, and seven on D+2, for a total of 39 air strikes. Seven

aircraft were lost in these operations. Furthermore, six C-54s made air resupply drops and one C-46 landed on the beachhead airstrip on the evening of D-Day.

STATEMENT: It is believed that the Cuban pilots did as well as could be expected and they would have done better in an aura of victory.

Following this the Group were read a paper by [REDACTED] in which he set forth his personal opinion as to some of the deficiencies which became apparent during the operation. Among these deficiencies were:

The lack of clear-cut policy directives signed. He does not believe that verbal instructions are sufficient.

The slowness of government machinery in making policy decisions.

Overcentralization of control. This prompted some discussion, resulting in the statement that the CIA doesn't have the capability to organize and train paramilitary forces. At this point a message was read from [REDACTED] just prior to the invasion in which he indicated that the invasion force was better armed and equipped than some U. S. Infantry units and that [REDACTED] believed the air unit was as well qualified as the best U. S. Air Force squadron.

Lack of adequate organization and staff. The paramilitary responsibility should go to the DOD.

Training conditions were unsatisfactory. The desirability of using bases on Saipan or in the United States were considered with no conclusions reached.

The meeting adjourned.

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E.O. 11652, Sec. II
Nat'l. Archive Review Committee, 6/21/78
By JK MARS, Date 6/22/78

26 April 1961 - Fourth Meeting

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E.O. 11652, Sec. II
Nat'l. Archive Review Committee, 6/21/78
By... JK..... NARS, Date 5/22/78

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

PARAMILITARY STUDY GROUP MEETING

AT THE PENTAGON

FOURTH MEETING

26 APRIL 1961

PRESENT

GENERAL TAYLOR

GENERAL CABELL

MR. KENNEDY

GENERAL McGARR

ADMIRAL BURKE

GENERAL GRAY

MR. BISSELL

COMMANDER MITCHELL

LT COLONEL TARWATER

(The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.)

The basic problem in Indo-China is one of Communist insurgency. This insurgency results in large measure from the fact that the insurgents can enter anywhere along an 850-mile long border and Diem does not have adequate forces to provide more than an alert capability. These Communist insurgents are good, tough, and motivated and they are tied together by an effective communications net. They have been successful to the extent that Diem now controls only 42% of the country.

Some of the reasons for the insurgents' success are that when the Communists withdrew from the South previously, they took many youths from that area with them. These youths were trained and are now hard-core, effective Communists and have been reinfiltated into Diem's area. Communists are sabotaging all aspects of national power, political and economic as well as military. They have set up a liberation front as a legal device for furthering their objectives.

As a result of these actions the Communist insurgents have succeeded in tying up 80-85% of Diem's armed forces 24 hours a day. Furthermore, the enemy can increase his effort as he has a massive reinforcement capability. Four million out of the 12 million people in the country are Communist.

General McGarr pointed out that the Indo-Chinese problem could not be treated as an individual problem for if we should lose Indo-China we would lose Southeast Asia. He also stated we were losing face in the country. That people were beginning to ask if we would stand by them when their hour of decision came, or whether we would treat them as we have treated Laos.

In order to defeat the insurgents Diem now has a national plan, one of the key elements of which is to seal the borders militarily and politically, primarily by putting a cork across the top of the nation. Then, in accordance with his counter-insurgency plan, the country will be cleared area by area.

Diem's military effectiveness is improving. One of the reasons for this is that interservice coordination has now been established. Furthermore, the U.S. Element has been quite successful in their training efforts and in imbuing the Indo-Chinese with additional will and determination. This is attested to by the fact that since the first of the year Diem's units have initiated at least two-thirds of the actions against the insurgents.

[REDACTED]

General McGarr stated that most of the actions that have to be taken right now in order to at least suppress the insurgents, to the extent that Diem can operate, are now under way. However, these actions have not been budgeted for and it is imperative that Diem be provided an additional 50 million dollars in order to finance these essential programs.

General McGarr stated that he believed we should back Diem to the hilt as he is one of the most effective anti-Communists in the world today.

QUESTION: If we put guerrillas into the Communist area how many of these insurgents would it tie down.

ANSWER: Well, this is hard to tell. However, one of the considerations is that CIA is building nets in North Vietnam and they feel that these nets should be built before we go in with a guerrilla attack, otherwise we might disturb their operation in the area. Furthermore, when this was discussed with Diem he said, with tongue in cheek, "Well, you know I must be legal in all that I do."

QUESTION: Couldn't we treat the insurgents in Indo-China as the British treated the insurgents in Malaya.

ANSWER: In Malaya they had only a small border with the Thais who helped seal the border. Also, in Malaya they could separate the insurgents from the native population because of their ethnic differences. In Malaya they could use food as a weapon, whereas in Indo-China they don't have to bring food with them. Furthermore, in Malaya Templer made the policy and conducted the operations, and he also had Commonwealth troops and officers to aid in his operation. I might also point out that even with these advantages it still took the British 13 years to put down the insurgency in Malaya.

At this point the Group was adjourned to reconvene at CIA.

QUESTION: How did the President get his intelligence on this operation.

[REDACTED]

At this point it was decided that it would be helpful to run through the intelligence information contained in the 11 March paper on the proposed operation against Cuba. This intelligence in essence indicated that despite growing

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

discontent within Cuba time was against us. Castro was increasing his police state controls and his military effectiveness to the extent that unless some outside support, some shock action, was taken within six months, it would probably be militarily infeasible to overthrow Castro with a force composed of Cuban exiles.

STATEMENT: It should be made very clear that the idea that time was running out weighed very heavily in the decision making.

QUESTION: You mentioned the requirement for shock and yet the invasion plan that was finally implemented was purposely limited.

ANSWER: But the purpose of this, sir, was not to limit the shock on the Cubans, but rather to limit the shock on the rest of the world, making it appear that the invasion was something that the Cubans could do by themselves.

At this point in the meeting the intelligence available to the planners and the tactical commander was discussed.

[REDACTED]

They

were surprised, however, by the capabilities of the pilots which Castro committed against the invasion force. In retrospect it was believed that these aircraft were probably flown by 50 Cuban pilots that had been trained in Czechoslovakia and returned to Cuba a few days before the invasion.

With regard to Castro's navy, it was believed that the capability of this force was low and that they would not be inclined to fight. This estimate held good, for only three small vessels were committed, two of which were sunk, while their larger naval units remained at their stations.

The weakest tactical intelligence was on the location of the ground troops. A reason for this was because the militia was not well organized in the sense that no two units were organized exactly the same nor with the same number of personnel. Intelligence was aware, however, of the location of Castro's armored units and his military headquarters. In this connection it had been pointed out that Castro had a force of 6,000 troops armed with tanks and artillery which could arrive at the beachhead within 10 hours. It's believed the tanks used against the invaders were part of this force. If the troops fighting the invasion force were militia, then the estimate of the militia's willingness to fight was incorrect. However, if this force was not militia,

[REDACTED]

but rather the force mentioned above spearheaded by foreigners, then the estimates were not wrong.

[REDACTED]

With regard to the absence of uprising throughout Cuba during the period of the invasions, it should be pointed out that reports [REDACTED] of the numbers of people that were likely to support the invasion had been reduced from 20-30,000 down to 2,500 to 3,000 active guerrillas. It was also stated in the intelligence estimates that there would not be any major uprisings until the Cubans could see visible evidence of the invasion force. Consequently, no major uprisings were anticipated until the invasion force had been able to take towns in the Matanzas Province.

STATEMENT: You are now describing much more than a successful lodgment.

RESPONSE: Yes, but we felt that the force had to move out to make the lodgment visible.

QUESTION: Inasmuch as this was a key element in the JCS decision, was it ever made clear to them this degree of success was necessary in the ultimate success of the operation.

ANSWER: I believe the impression was given that the lodgment should last for at least a week. This would have been a significant factor in influencing potential dissidents.

STATEMENT: It was also hoped that the landings in the Oriente and uprisings in the Pinar del Rio would help create the catalyst necessary to trigger uprisings throughout Cuba.

STATEMENT: One of the factors that made us think that the resistance potential within Cuba was substantial was the fact that we had a backlog of [REDACTED] requests from our agents for supplies, arms and ammunition for 8,000 people. These people were crying for supplies. Had we been able to provide this equipment these people would have had something to rise with.

At this point General Taylor requested a brief tabulation of how many reports had been received indicating that people were ready to rise against Castro, and also indicating the number of people that were ready to rise.

QUESTION: At any time did you give an estimate of the resistance potential within Cuba.

ANSWER: I don't believe any numerical estimate was given.

QUESTION: You did expect enough uprisings throughout the country, however, to start the army of liberation.

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: At no point, however, was any formal estimate of this possibility given.

ANSWER: I have a paper of 3 March in which it was estimated that between 2,500 and 3,000 were actively engaged against Castro, that 20,000 were potential supporters of the invasion force, and that 25% of the population was opposed to the Castro regime.

QUESTION: Did you ever actually define the degree of success necessary to provoke adequate uprising to permit ultimate success.

ANSWER: To establish a beachhead and hold it for some time, approximately a week, together with activities by our air units carrying out their scheduled missions.

QUESTION: Do you believe that the impression prevailed that there would be spontaneous uprisings.

ANSWER: I myself didn't believe there would be major uprisings within 24 to 48 hours.

QUESTION: Do you recall what the JCS said on this issue.

ANSWER: They said the invasion force had a reasonable chance of establishing a lodgment and that ultimate success would depend on uprisings within Cuba.

At this point the JCS Evaluation of the alternate objective area Proposals was read. Following this the question was raised as to whether JCS had ever acted on the Zapata plan. The answer was given that the JCS had been advised of the change by General Gray.

QUESTION: Where in the JCS Evaluation of the Zapata Plan does it say that there will be air strikes.

ANSWER: It doesn't.

STATEMENT: At this stage of the game there was no plan - only concepts. There was no time to develop a plan as such.

STATEMENT: At this point General Gray stated that's he remembered, and as his notes indicate, the Joint Chiefs understood that the Zapata Plan included only D-Day strikes and no pre-D-Day strikes.

QUESTION: How much time did the JCS give to this problem.

ANSWER: About one hour. It should be pointed out, however, that at the time the JCS considered the alternatives, the Trinidad Plan had not been ruled out and so in the evaluation of the alternatives it was stated that Zapata was the best of alternatives, however, the Trinidad Plan still had the best hope of success.

QUESTION: When were the JCS or their representatives first briefed on the original plan.

ANSWER: On 3 February.

QUESTION: Was a careful study of this plan made at this time.

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: The basic Trinidad Plan did not change prior to March 11 when alternative proposals had been requested.

ANSWER: This is essentially correct.

QUESTION: Was Mr. Rusk briefed on the Cuba Plan prior to 10 March.

ANSWER: I believe he was briefed on some elements of the plan, but not on the military details.

STATEMENT: State Department representatives, however, had continued to oppose the plan.

STATEMENT: In attempting to overcome State Department objections, CIA prior to March 11 had agreed to give up the pre-D-Day air strikes.

STATEMENT: The 11 March meeting resulted in two new parameters for the operation. First, a less spectacular landing and, second, possession of an airfield to which the B-26 aircraft could be attributed.

STATEMENT: These decisions led to the hurried search for alternative operational concepts that would meet the new parameters.

STATEMENT: JCS representatives were briefed on these concepts on the 14th of March.

QUESTION: What factors led to the decision to split the force in the Zapata Plan.

ANSWER: Further investigation had revealed that the airfield at Red Beach was inadequate for our purposes. It also revealed there was an airfield south of Red Beach that was adequate to our needs. Consequently the decision to split the force was made in order to protect the airfield and to

protect the defiles into the landing area. Furthermore, we were concerned about the fact that the ships that went to Red Beach had an 18-mile run and might not get out.

STATEMENT: At the 15 March meeting the President indicated that he did not like the dawn landings and directed that this aspect be reconsidered. On the 16th of March the President approved the revised Zapata Plan for progressive implementation, but he retained the ability to cancel.

QUESTION: At the 16 March meeting was the JCS preference for the original Trinidad Plan over the Zapata Plan presented.

ANSWER: I don't think so.

QUESTION: Do you think it was in the President's mind that these men could disappear as a guerrilla force if necessary.

ANSWER: Yes.

STATEMENT: The Zapata area has traditionally been an area for guerrilla operations.

RESPONSE: When we went to the State Department we discussed the seriousness of calling off the air strikes. However, I did not say that we would cancel the operation because at this time we did not have the ability to call it off.

STATEMENT: I can't believe that if the President had understood how important the air strikes were that he would have called them off.

RESPONSE: All members of the Group concurred.

STATEMENT: If the President's decision had been made earlier I would have flown out to Glen Ora and discussed the matter with him. However, when the decision was finally made it was too late to do this.

At this point Mr. Bissell gave some of his personal views as to some of the wrong judgments made. First, the underestimation of Castro's capability in certain specific respects, mainly his organization ability, speed of movement and will to fight. We also underestimated his air capability. Example, contrary to our opinion, the T-33s were armed and flown with skill, loyalty and determination. In retrospect, some of the reasons for this underestimation may have been the use by Castro of block technicians and, if this is so, it is believed that one of their greatest contributions may have been in the staff work. Our second major mistake was our failure to develop an adequate air

capability. We should have had at least 50% more B-26 pilots. We should have been able to foresee the need for these pilots. We should have allowed for some attrition, and the two aircraft cover over the beach was understated. Another major mistake was the restriction on the employment of our air capability between D-2 and D-Day. As to the administrative and organizational shortcomings, it is believed that these contributed much to the final failure. Another error was involved in the inevitable conflict between the requirements for military effectiveness and those of disclaimability. In the late stages of this operation I believe unnecessary concessions were made in favor of disclaimability which were unrealistic. Inasmuch as so much of the operation was already common knowledge, our chances of success would have been much greater if we had been allowed to use U.S. soldiers of fortune and to make air strikes from U.S. bases. In any future operations a cold-blooded appraisal should be made of the degree to which it is necessary to make concessions in favor of disclaimability as opposed to military effectiveness.

At this point Mr. Dulles interjected that he was in basic agreement, but he would like to add two additional items. First, he felt that he should have asked the Navy their opinion of what was necessary to assure that the men would get safely ashore with their material during a night landing on an unfamiliar coast. This opinion should have been rendered without concern for political considerations. Another factor was that the President was faced with hurried and difficult decisions. We had made it very clear to him that to call off the operation would have resulted in a very unpleasant situation.

STATEMENT: The odds against any operation of this kind are almost insurmountable until the Government faces up to making sharp decisions promptly.

QUESTION: Did the Government give the CIA an almost impossible job.

ANSWER: I don't believe so. I think we were closer to success than you realize.

STATEMENT: Despite the disaster the U.S. must retain the capability for unofficial military actions. Whenever the U.S. engages in this sort of operation we will again be faced with the same dilemma of disclaimability versus military effectiveness. In this connection, I think we should consider changing our overt foreign policy posture for we have a tendency to make our operations extremely difficult by oversanctimonious ~~announcements~~.

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By JK NARS, Date 6/22/78

27 April 1961 - Fifth Meeting

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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

PARAMILITARY STUDY GROUP MEETING

AT THE PENTAGON

27 APRIL 1961

PRESENT

GENERAL TAYLOR

GENERAL ERSKINE

MR. KENNEDY

GENERAL GRAY

MR. DULLES

~~ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
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COMMANDER MITCHELL

LT COL TARWATER

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(The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.)

The first person to appear before the Group was General Erskine. In explaining his responsibilities, he indicated that he worked with CIA on covert matters and that he also represented the Secretary of Defense on the United States Information Board and the National Security Agency, as well as on counterintelligence matters.

QUESTION: How was your office brought into the Cuba operation.

ANSWER: Our job was primarily one of support. We were not in on the plans or the recommendations. In providing support to the CIA, we normally work through contact officers with the individual services to provide CIA the support they need.

QUESTION: If CIA wants [REDACTED] what is the procedure for handling their request.

ANSWER: Generally speaking, [REDACTED]

QUESTION: Is there an agreed number of [REDACTED]

ANSWER: Yes. However, I will have to check on the exact

QUESTION: What [REDACTED] to CIA.

ANSWER: We [REDACTED]

QUESTION: How many depots does CIA have.

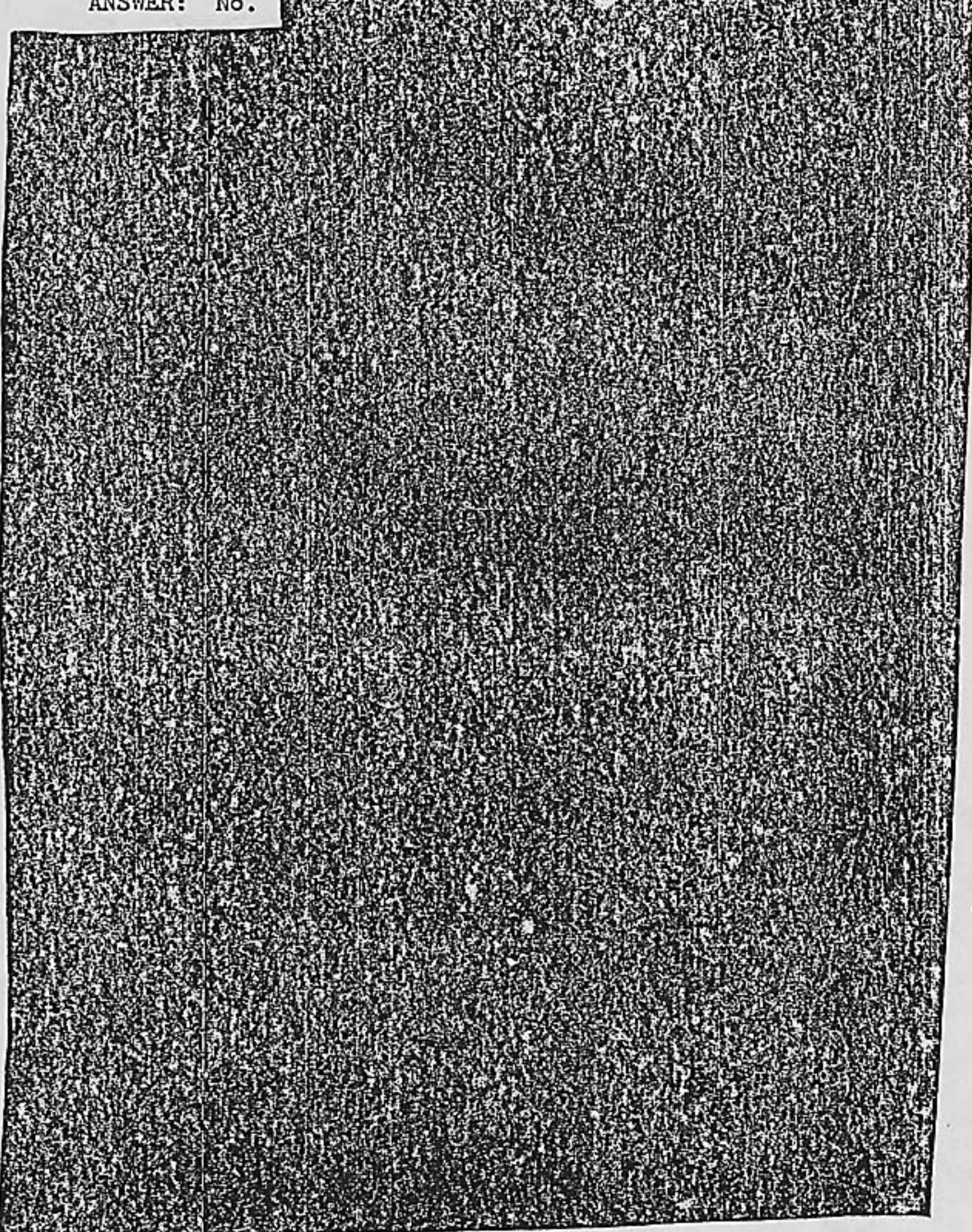
QUESTION: Does CIA have any Communist planes.

ANSWER: A few broken-up aircraft.

QUESTION: Is there anything [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
that you believe should be improved.

ANSWER: No. [REDACTED]



At this point General Erskine left the room and General Gray appeared to answer questions and give his comments.

QUESTION: Would you give us your personal opinion as to how the Government should be organized in order to cope with a Cuban type situation in the most effective manner.

ANSWER: It seems to me it takes almost a different type

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

2

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group for each operation. However, I believe it would be better to start an interdepartmental group that would develop a concept and assign tasks to each of the governmental agencies subject to the approval of the President, and then charge each agency with the execution of these tasks. In the Cuba operation CIA unilaterally developed the concepts. The other governmental agencies were essentially in a supporting role. I believe it's of particular value to have all the agencies participating from the start in order to assure that each agency is aware of all the implications of the operation at the earliest date. For example, in the Cuba operation this would have meant that the State Department would have been brought into the planning in time to work in their ideas and to indoctrinate their people on the overall concept and the requirements for it.

STATEMENT: You are making the point that the plan should have been conceived and developed by an interagency group.

RESPONSE: That is correct. However, one agency should be given the basic responsibility.

QUESTION: Is this interagency group any different than the special group which is already in existence.

ANSWER: Yes. The special group is simply a high-level group that considers matters brought before it, makes a decision, and then the agencies act on the decision, whereas the interagency group would be a working group that would continue to have responsibility for a given operation.

QUESTION: Did the special group approve the plan to get rid of Castro.

ANSWER: Yes, at the 13 January meeting. The State Department concurred in the CIA view that Castro must go. This determination led to the March 17th paper, which sets forth the basic concept with CIA responsible for three basic aspects of the plan and the State Department responsible for one.

STATEMENT: If General Gray's concept had been used to implement the 17 March paper it seems to me that the primary

difference would have been that the force that was to invade Cuba would have come under CINCLANT rather than under the CIA. It seems to me that the basic weakness of this concept is the pyramid of committees.

QUESTION: To whom does the DCI report.

ANSWER: Statutorily to the National Security Council.
However, inasmuch as the National Security Council is only advisory
to the President the DCI reports to the President.

QUESTION: Do you think 5412 puts the Cuban operation under CIA.

— ANSWER: Yes, if Cuba follows in the spirit of paragraph 6.

QUESTION: Does paragraph 6 describe the Cuba situation.

ANSWER: No, Cuba went beyond it. Of course, every development beyond it went to the President for decision.

STATEMENT: I think the important point is that this document was not designed to cover a Cuba type operation. For example, on the next page it says no open conflict.

STATEMENT: I have a feeling we should look at this thing more broadly than just from the standpoint of a covert operation. Actually it is part of something much broader, which can be called the cold war, which involves all aspects of national power, and paramilitary operations are only one segment of the cold war.

QUESTION: Who is responsible for success in the cold war.

ANSWER: There are really three agencies that are responsible.

STATEMENT: It seems to me there should be a clear line of responsibility, without any committees, running from the President to the Secretary of State to the director of the cold war.

RESPONSE: I don't think one man could handle all the actions.

STATEMENT: We had this problem on the Joint Staff. I believe that what we did to solve the problem for us is also applicable on the national level. We developed a system for monitoring the various countries throughout the world in terms of their criticality. We established the problem areas within the country and then made recommendations as to what actions should be taken in order to best achieve U. S. national interests.

STATEMENT: You are giving us so much information it is difficult to absorb. Maybe you should give us a briefing.

STATEMENT: One thing our Government really lacks in conducting the cold war is an economic unit that concerns itself primarily with cold war actions.

STATEMENT: It seems to me that we have three courses of action. First, we can maintain the status quo. Second, we can pass the paramilitary responsibilities to the DOD. Or third, we can examine the whole cold war problem.

At this point General Gray left and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] described his part in the Cuban operation. He stated that he joined the working group at the time the original Trinidad Plan was evaluated. Later he was one of three that went into the training area to have a first-hand look at the training operation and to evaluate the capabilities of the force which was being prepared to invade Cuba. Later, in accordance with one of his recommendations, he was returned to the area to help the force prove their amphibious logistic capability. He remained with the force for approximately three weeks.

QUESTION: Would you give us your impressions, please.

ANSWER: These are personal opinions. Troops were trained thoroughly in the use of their weapons. I noted, however, that below the brigade level they were not organized in the usual military manner. In the subordinate units, as far as organization was concerned, there was an individual referred to as the leader. I inquired as to the reason for this. I was informed that it was for psychological reasons and that the subordinate units would have a rank structure when they left for the port. The training I was able to give was minimal and conducted with the brigade staff. This was due to the fact that the actual box movers were not there when I arrived. Fifty finally arrived the last day I was there. The basic logistic concept of the force was that the supplies would be put on the beach and the troops would come back and get what they needed.

QUESTION: How can you account for the fact that they had no amphibious training prior to your arrival.

ANSWER: I can't answer that.

QUESTION: How would you say that the men in the invasion force compared with troops that we would have.

ANSWER: Physically they were in good shape. I would say, however, that in a fight it would be like putting our Marines against Boy Scouts. I believed that the over-all chance of military success was about 15%, that logically the operation would likely fall apart. I stated this in the original JCS evaluation. The transportation was totally inadequate in that they had assigned trucks to individual commanders instead of having these under central control. They did not have a fuel capability to support air operations. The 50-gallon fuel drums weighed 400 pounds and had to be manhandled. They had no bridging capability. They had no floodlight systems and consequently they couldn't work the beaches at night. Their plans for distribution of supplies from the dump areas were practically nonexistent. They had no maintenance equipment beyond hand tools.

QUESTION: What condition were they in logically when you left.

ANSWER: Essentially the same condition as when I arrived, except that I had jerry-rigged a TACLOG and they had acquired a crawler crane to help unload things on the beach.

STATEMENT: The major fault with the whole operation was that it was too loose, there was no control. In my opinion it was primarily a lack of planning.

QUESTION: When the objective area was changed from Trinidad to Zapata did it change your estimate.

ANSWER: No. Equipmentwise they had added a traveling crane. However, in the original Trinidad Plan they were going to use trucks or the dock to unload. In the Zapata Plan the logistics had to go in across the beach.

QUESTION: Was there any attempt to rehearse the logistic actions.

STATEMENT: You are giving us so much information it is difficult to absorb. Maybe you should give us a briefing.

STATEMENT: One thing our Government really lacks in conducting the cold war is an economic unit that concerns itself primarily with cold war actions.

STATEMENT: It seems to me that we have three courses of action. First, we can maintain the status quo. Second, we can pass the paramilitary responsibilities to the DOD. Or third, we can examine the whole cold war problem.

At this point General Gray left and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] described his part in the Cuban operation. He stated that he joined the working group at the time the original Trinidad Plan was evaluated. Later he was one of three that went into the training area to have a first-hand look at the training operation and to evaluate the capabilities of the force which was being prepared to invade Cuba. Later, in accordance with one of his recommendations, he was returned to the area to help the force prove their amphibious logistic capability. He remained with the force for approximately three weeks.

QUESTION: Would you give us your impressions, please.

ANSWER: These are personal opinions. Troops were trained thoroughly in the use of their weapons. I noted, however, that below the brigade level they were not organized in the usual military manner. In the subordinate units, as far as organization was concerned, there was an individual referred to as the leader. I inquired as to the reason for this. I was informed that it was for psychological reasons and that the subordinate units would have a rank structure when they left for the port. The training I was able to give was minimal and conducted with the brigade staff. This was due to the fact that the actual box movers were not there when I arrived. Fifty finally arrived the last day I was there. The basic logistic concept of the force was that the supplies would be put on the beach and the troops would come back and get what they needed.

STATEMENT: In the future we must carry out any operations of this type in such manner that the President, who has shown the highest courage, will not have to assume the responsibility.

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By JK MARS, Date 6/24/78

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Nat'l. Archive Review Committee, 6/21/78
By JK NARS, Date 6/22/78

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

PARAMILITARY STUDY GROUP MEETING

AT THE PENTAGON

28 APRIL 1961

PRESENT

GENERAL TAYLOR

ADMIRAL DENNISON

MR. KENNEDY

CAPTAIN FERGUSON

MR. DULLES

COMMANDER McCUALEY

ADMIRAL BURKE

[REDACTED]
MR. KING

[REDACTED]
COMMANDER MITCHELL

LT COLONEL TARWATER

The first order of business was the reading of a report of conversation between a CIA representative and approximately sixty of the Cuban Volunteer Air Force returnees. The report stated that while many of the returnees had specific complaints and criticisms of how the project was conducted, there was little, if any, trace of genuine bitterness or hostility toward the United States. There was no defeatism amongst the returnees and the question most asked was, "When do we get going again?" Some of the returnees' observations were as follows:

- a. Failure to follow the D-2 air strikes was a serious mistake as it gave Castro time to mobilize his forces and left elements of his air force intact.
- b. The landings should not have been permitted until complete domination of the air had been achieved.
- c. The operation was defeated by three planes.
- d. None of the pilots saw MIGs. They doubted that any of Castro's aircraft were piloted by non-Cubans.
- e. None believed that Castro had been aware of the landing site, although they admitted that he had moved in with tanks and trucks at great speed.
- f. They explained the absence of popular uprisings by the fact that the landing was in an isolated area; and, second, the notorious fact that eighty per cent of the Cubans will never join an insurrection until they are sure that it is winning. Nevertheless, they pointed out that mass arrests throughout Cuba neutralized many of the people who would have revolted before these people were aware that an invasion was taking place.
- g. Little, if any, reference was made to the Revolutionary Council.
- h. Most of the Air Force personnel seemed certain that they would soon be returning to action.
- i. All the returnees were unstinting in their praise of their U. S. instructors.

In answer to a previous question, Mr. Dulles read the figures of the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statements made.)

At this point, [REDACTED] appeared before the Group. He stated that he had primarily served as a [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Further, on the 14th of April he and a radio operator went aboard the ESSEX. They proceeded to a point south of Cuba where they intercepted the invasion force ships.

QUESTION: Was the rendezvous on time?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: There is no question in your mind as to a possible loss of surprise?

ANSWER: No. It went better than I expected.

QUESTION: Did you have radio contact with the Cuban ships?

ANSWER: Yes, to some extent.

STATEMENT: The transfer from the LSD took place without incident and the Navy withdrew.

QUESTION: Why do you think the two LCIs stayed in the area after two of the other ships had been sunk, while several other merchant ships left the area and continued going south?

ANSWER: Because of the influence of the Americans aboard the LCIs.

STATEMENT: The ATLANTICO finally stopped, but the CARIBE just kept on going until intercepted by a destroyer.

QUESTION: Did the CARIBE have ammunition aboard?

ANSWER: It had considerable aviation gas and ammunition aboard, yes.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

QUESTION: Where did the orders to the ship commanders originate?

ANSWER: From Washington.

QUESTION: How long did it take for the orders to be transmitted?

MR. KING: I read messages twenty minutes after they had been sent.

STATEMENT: At the White House, we were twelve hours behind.

STATEMENT: We sent some dispatches from Washington to the skippers to which they never responded.

MR. KENNEDY: I would say that one of the greatest problems was the inadequacy of communications.

[REDACTED]: I believe it would have been desirable if the Navy had provided us with a back-up communications capability.

QUESTION: Can we have a briefing on this communications problem?

ANSWER: Yes, I believe [REDACTED], who drew up the communications plan for the entire operation, would be the best man to talk to you about this.

[REDACTED]
At this point, [REDACTED] left and [REDACTED] entered. He stated that he was a retired Army officer with four years special force experience. He stated that he ran the Operation Center aboard one of the LCIs and that he was in contact with the brigade commander for three days and nights. He also stated that he had a few points he wanted to make as an American. He stated that:

- (1) We had a sound plan and it would have worked if we'd had air support.
- (2) The brigade was winning. If they'd have had ammunition, they would have inflicted tremendous damage on Castro.
- (3) The men in this force fought as well as any he had ever seen.

STATEMENT: We made the assembly on time. Then I led the UDT Team into the beach. As we moved into the beach, I could see six men looking out to sea. Consequently, I turned off the engine on our boat to look and listen and see if I could determine if it was

us they were looking for. However, everything was quiet, and as I looked around I could see only blackness. These men then went into a house and the lights went out. About that time, a little later rather, a jeep came down to the beach and turned their lights right on us. At that point, we opened up on him with everything we had. I then called the ships, and told them that we had been spotted, and for them to move on in. We then put out red and white lights to mark the beach; and about that time all the lights in the town went out at once, which made it obvious that someone had developed a plan. As the boats moved in to Blue Beach, they were fired on by only one machine gun from the town. Two of the LCVPs came in and rammed on a coral reef. If we hadn't been discovered, we would have found channels through which the landing craft could have moved to the beach. The men showed good discipline as they went ashore. At exactly six o'clock, just after first light, Red Beach called and said that they were under air attack. I'd like to make the point right here that the blue identifying band on the friendly B-26s was not adequate. We didn't know which B-26s were friendly and which were enemy until they opened fire. At daylight we found the channel for the LCUs. By ten o'clock all the LCUs were unloaded. The LCUs were also utilized in bringing the troops ashore, and all the troops did get ashore. There were about 100 militia in the town at Blue Beach. Seventy were captured and 30 got in a truck and went to Cienfuegos for help apparently. Our people talked to the Chief of Militia in the town, who said that he had been completely misinformed and that henceforth he would give complete cooperation to the invasion force.

QUESTION: How did Artimus act?

ANSWER: Excellent. He was a dedicated leader and a most moving speaker. ██████████ said that he was no double agent, as reported by some newspapers.

STATEMENT: We could fight off the B-26s and the Sea Furies, but we couldn't touch the T-33s. They fired their rockets from close in and didn't miss, and our fire didn't bother them a bit.

STATEMENT: The merchant ships just ran off and left us. They had the ammunition. Every ship had ammunition. The main communications equipment was aboard the ATLANTICO and it left, as I previously mentioned.

STATEMENT: Our aircraft behaved wonderfully.

STATEMENT: The first attack at Red Beach came at ten o'clock with approximately 500 militia and tanks.

STATEMENT: Landing in the swampy area was a good idea, because after their first attack the militia would not attack without tank support, and the only way you could get through the swamps was on the narrow roads. If we'd had air superiority, we'd have been in an extremely strong position.

STATEMENT: On the night of D-Day we were scheduled to make a fast ammunition supply run in to the beach. However, by the time we received the order and would have had time to make the necessary preparations it was too late. We couldn't have arrived there until after first light. The primary problem the brigade commander faced was the lack of ammunition. He constantly made requests for ammunition, and stated that all he needed was ammunition and air support. I believe it's true that the ground attacks never really hurt the brigade, for the brigade was still in good condition when the end came. They just ran out of ammunition. (See Tab A)

STATEMENT: One of the Cuban officers said that the forces employed in the invasion area were militia, not regular army troops. We hadn't known that the militia could run tanks.

QUESTION: Did Castro use any MIGs?

ANSWER: As far as we know, there were only T-33s in the area. However, one man, when asked to draw a picture of the type aircraft he was calling a MIG, did draw the outline of a MIG rather than a T-33.

QUESTION: Do you think that Castro's force fought well?

ANSWER: No, sir. When you stopped the tanks, they stopped, that is, after the first attack. After the first attack they wouldn't go anywhere without a tank.

STATEMENT: One man insisted that they were gassed by tank shells at night. He stated they found that a shell from a tank sort of choked them, and they all ran out of the area; and that later they found ten dead men with no marks on them.

QUESTION: What about the air drops?

ANSWER: The first was dropped directly over the airfield, but the wind blew it off the runways into the swamps. The second one was dropped on the town and every package was recovered. The third was dropped over the town, but the wind blew it into the water. However, most of this was recovered. One C-46 was landed just at daylight bringing in some tank ammunition, and it took out one wounded man. However, the airfield had been in usable condition, even including lights.

At this point, [REDACTED] left and Admiral Dennison appeared before the Group.

ADMIRAL DENNISON

STATEMENT: My first knowledge that something might happen with regard to Cuba goes back to April 1960, when we helped construct facilities on Swan Island. The next indication I had was when the commander of my amphibious force advised me that he had the task of sanitizing some landing craft, as well as transporting these craft in an LSD to Puerto Rico. At this point, I consulted with General Lemnitzer and asked him if the JCS was aware of these activities. General Lemnitzer told me that he knew something of the activities. At that time he called General Cabell and requested that I be informed of the operation. Consequently, a CIA representative came down and briefed me on a portion of the plan. He explained that the planning for the operation was compartmentalized and that no one group knew all about the operation.

STATEMENT: On the 9th of February I had the privilege of talking with the President. I asked him if I would be engaged in any possible bail-out operations. He responded definitely no, that if anything went wrong the force would fade into the hinterland. The JCS Directive of 7 April set forth the nature of the naval

operation that would be required and directed the mission be executed in such manner that the United States could plausibly deny that we had any part in the operation. On 1 April 1961 I issued my own operation order which set up, among other things, the rules of engagement for surface ships and for the air patrol (Tab B). On 1 April I received JSM-365-61, which gave me my basic orders and also indicated that the CIA was responsible for the planning and implementation of the operation with the DOD in a support role.

STATEMENT: As of this date, I have never seen a copy of the Cuban Invasion Plan. As things turned out, it would have been most helpful if I had. For example, when we observed the PERKA we thought it was a ship that had been taken over by the refugees. We had no knowledge of the men aboard the PERKA. Furthermore, when we were called upon to start the rescue operation, we didn't know how many men were in there, what particular beaches they'd be landing on, where they were likely to be, or any information of this sort. I understand that the reason we probably were not informed of the details of the plan was because it was felt that we had no need for it. But as I say, as it turned out, we certainly did have. On the 5th of April I received a dispatch from the JCS which postponed D-Day from 10 April by at least 48 and probably 98 hours.^(Tab B) In the dispatch which informed me of the new D-Day of 17 April, I was also informed of a change in the concept of the support that I was to provide. Essentially, this change consisted of the fact that instead of convoying the invasion fleet my forces would be called on to provide area coverage.

STATEMENT: We had a very difficult time communicating with the Cuban invasion force ships. We didn't know the communications circuits of the ships, nor did we have other adequate means of communication. If the invasion force had been attacked, we'd have had a very difficult time communicationwise. At the same time that I received the change in the concept of the support I was to provide, I also received the first major changes in the rules of engagement. (Tab B)

QUESTION: Who made the decision to change the rules of engagement?

After some discussion of this question, it was decided that the JCS memo of record on the change on the rules of engagement should be secured.

STATEMENT: We were also informed that it was desired that the chance of aborting the mission be minimized. I was informed that the Cuban invasion force was prepared to take risks to prevent the possibility of aborting the mission by overly anxious intervention.

STATEMENT: I wanted then, and I still want, more comprehensive, current intelligence on Cuba, particularly photographs. I am particularly concerned about Guantanamo. What Castro's reaction may be in this connection is a great concern to me.

STATEMENT: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

STATEMENT: In view of the extent to which we became involved in the Cuban operation, I believe that it should have been conducted by me, through a special task force. I believe that in an operation of this sort the control has to be centralized, and the control should be military. Even in this covert operation, at some stage it should have been handled by the regular military staff rather than a group restricted in size by security considerations.

It was agreed that Admiral Dennison would forward to the Study Group a copy of his record of the operation.

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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

PARAMILITARY STUDY GROUP MEETING

AT THE PENTAGON

1 MAY 1961

SEVENTH MEETING

PRESENT

GENERAL TAYLOR

MR. McGEORGE BUNDY

MR. KENNEDY

ADMIRAL CLARK

MR. DULLES

CAPTAIN CRUTCHFIELD

ADMIRAL BURKE

CAPTAIN KENSCHER

COMMANDER McGRIFFIN

[REDACTED]

COMMANDER MITCHELL

LT COLONEL TARWATER

ULTRASENSITIVE

(The following notes are [redacted] verbatim records, but represent the substance of the statements made.)

At the opening of the meeting General Taylor tabled a list of nine points concerning the Cuba operation on which he wanted additional information from CIA. CIA agreed to provide this information as soon as possible. The hope was also expressed that the interviews could be finished this week and that the final report would be ready for the President by the 15th of May.

ADMIRAL CLARK

Admiral Clark, the Commander of the Navy Task Group in the operation, was the first person to appear before the Group. In his introductory remarks he made the point that all the orders he had received were good dispatches and clear and that they were all carried out fully; that his evacuation efforts, however, were difficult because he couldn't fire back and because the waters in the Bay were restricted.

QUESTION: With regard to the one-hour period when you were flying CAP for the CEF air unit there is some indication that there may have been a misunderstanding on the time. Please describe what happened.

ANSWER: Yes. We were ordered to fly cover for the CEF bombers from 0630 to 0730 Romeo on the morning of the 19th of April. However, I decided to play this one safe and ordered my people to be on station one-half hour early in the event that the CEF aircraft made the trip quicker than they had anticipated. However, they came over our ship one hour early and consequently we launched our aircraft immediately. We arrived over the beach area forty minutes before 0630 Romeo. However, by that time the CEF aircraft had already made their strikes and left.

At this point Mr. King was requested to check with the CEF air forces and determine what caused the time discrepancy.

QUESTION: Would you describe what you saw on the reconnaissance flights on D+1 and D+2?

COMMANDER McGRIFFIN: On D+1 at approximately 1530 there was lots of traffic moving down the east side of the Bay. There were a number of tanks, trucks and there were six or eight burned-out busses. The tanks were not burned out apparently, however, because while they were stopped on the first flight at 1530, we checked again at 1730 and by that time they had moved. On D+2 we saw some burned-out friendly tanks. The enemy had established a

ULTRASENSITIVE

[REDACTED]

roadblock in an area north of the beachhead. A large number of trucks and forces were converging on the area from all directions. About 1200 on D+2 we saw the CEF all bunched up at the little resort on the beach.

QUESTION: You got the impression that there was a rapid and intensive reaction by Castro?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Admiral Clark, do you have any recommendations that you'd like to make with regard to the Cuba operation or any future operations of this sort?

ANSWER: I believe it went better than we had a right to expect. Possibly once the rules of engagement have been established, it would be desirable to give the commander on the spot a freer hand.

QUESTION: What do you think were the reasons for failure?

ANSWER: One obvious reason was that surprise was not achieved.

RESPONSE: All the evidence we have had to date indicates that tactical surprise was achieved.

ANSWER: Well, the opposition formed awfully fast. I think Castro's people saw the CEF force from a lighthouse and they also could have seen them from the air. Another possible reason for failure was that the beach was not as advertised. It was supposed to be a sandy beach, whereas it was coral. Furthermore, the opposition was not as advertised.

QUESTION: Could they have been seen by the lighthouse?

ANSWER: Yes, sir, they could have seen us very clearly from the lighthouse.

MR. DULLES: We have no evidence of any reports originating from this lighthouse. I'll have to talk to [REDACTED].

STATEMENT: With regard to the evacuation of the CEF force, on the last day we couldn't have evacuated the force unless we were prepared to fight our way in. If we'd been allowed to use counterforce we could have taken them all out. On D+3 we started our destroyers cruising along the beaches a couple of miles from shore at night and five miles from shore during the days so that the survivors could see us and would come out. A group of refugees of the invasion force did make their way to the keys west of Cochinos Bay and we picked them up. However, we picked up no one on the east side of the Bay. Without using counterforce it was impossible to move in to pick up survivors during the daylight because we were straddled by artillery fire at three miles offshore.

[REDACTED]

QUESTION: With regard to the possibility of the invasion forces having been sighted from the air, did any aircraft fly over or did you pick up any airliners?

ANSWER: Yes. Furthermore, since the convoy formed in the daylight, it could have been seen from the air.

STATEMENT: Well, let's ask [REDACTED] to check with the people that planned the naval portion of the operation and determine whether or not this lighthouse had been considered as a factor in the operation, and whether or not the force was supposed to come within sight of the lighthouse.

[REDACTED]
At this point Admiral Clark and the officers of his command left and [REDACTED] appeared before the Group. [REDACTED] stated that he was the operations officer for the project.

STATEMENT: Prior to September the Cubans were being trained as guerrilla teams. I went down on an inspection trip, during which the Guatemalan revolution broke out. We were concerned about the possibility of losing our bases. President Ydígoras requested that we make an airborne landing, which we did. I was in command of the outfit. Washington gave us permission to do this, but I operated under the Mission Chief in Guatemala.

MR. DULLES: We can give you the facts on this.

[REDACTED]: Following the Guatemalan revolt I was sent down to organize the brigade. On the 20th of November 1960 we had about 420 members in the Cuban force. During this period we were trying to build up our brigade and by the 8th of December we initiated a seven-week training program with approximately 575 to 600 troops.

QUESTION: Who were the trainers?

ANSWER: At this time I had five American trainers and Cuban officer personnel to assist in the training. However, it must be remembered that we weren't dealing with raw recruits.

QUESTION: How did you determine the background and potential leadership capabilities of the various persons in the brigade?

ANSWER: We had background files on each man. However, the actual selection for leadership positions depended on the performance of the men in the field.

QUESTION: Did you have political problems?

ANSWER: At first, yes. However, as it became obvious that no one received any special privileges and that all ranks were only temporary, and that if a man selected for a position of leadership couldn't handle the position he went back to the ranks, when these factors became evident the political problem subsided.

QUESTION: Tell us something of Pepe.

ANSWER: He came from a long line of military officers. His father was a General in the Cuban Army. Pepe was a Captain in the Cuban Army. He had trained at Fort Benning, Georgia. He could work with anyone. He was earnest, proud, self-sacrificing and a natural born leader.

QUESTION: Did you say you had ample leadership and training?

ANSWER: Adequate leadership and training, yes, but not experience. Twenty per cent of our troops, however, were former soldiers.

QUESTION: Did you have any reservations as to the readiness of this force?

ANSWER: No. I felt that each week they delayed would bring a retrogression in the force.

QUESTION: Was there ever any discussion of U.S. participation or direct assistance in this operation, militarily speaking?

ANSWER: Yes, there were rumors, but we carefully pointed out that diplomatic and logistical support would be given, and the lines of communication would be kept open. Beyond this, however, no support could be expected from the United States.

QUESTION: Did they feel betrayed when the United States aircraft didn't come in?

ANSWER: Yes. It was obvious that the enemy was using jets and the United States jets were visible to them and, of course, they couldn't understand why they didn't come to their assistance.

QUESTION: Then it was a natural reaction rather than their having been told that the United States would enter on their behalf?

ANSWER: Yes.

ULTRA-SENSITIVE

QUESTION: Did you think that the United States aircraft would come in and support the force?

ANSWER: I hoped so, but I didn't believe so.

QUESTION: Were instructions given as to what to do if the operation failed?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: What?

ANSWER: There were several contingencies: (1) If we passed the code word they were not to make the landing. (2) If the landing malfunctioned due to heavy surf or enemy opposition they were to disperse according to plan. They were to be evacuated by boat, and as a last resort they were to disperse and continue guerrilla operations in the swamp.

QUESTION: Were any specific areas in the swamp assigned for guerrilla operations?

ANSWER: No, sir.

QUESTION: Then when they fell back to Blue Beach they were doing what they were supposed to do so that they could be evacuated?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Could a man penetrate and live in the swamp?

ANSWER: Yes, a man could penetrate, but a unit couldn't, and there was enough small game, fish and fresh water in the swamp that men could survive.

QUESTION: If you had to evacuate the men by sea how would you have moved them out?

ANSWER: By the same boats that brought them in. We had 36 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ -foot aluminum ships. As I recall, I thought he mentioned that the men were searching for and using indigenous boats.

QUESTION: Do we have any evidence that Pepe ever gave the command for the force to become guerrillas?

ANSWER: No.

QUESTION: Do you believe that some of the men of the force could have come through the swamp?

ANSWER: Yes.

[REDACTED]: The pilots of the aircraft carrying the airborne troops said that the troops at DZ-1 were attacked by approximately 800 militia.

QUESTION: Do you believe that the landing was a surprise?

ANSWER: Yes, sir, because the time it took Castro to get tanks and artillery to the beachhead area were the exact times that we thought it would take to move this equipment from known positions.

QUESTION: Did you like the terrain for this operation in the Zapata area?

ANSWER: On the basis of the restrictions, yes. This would have worked. These boys were good. The only thing they lacked was ammunition.

STATEMENT: Four out of five drops were successful. We don't know what happened to one drop over Red Beach.

QUESTION: How many instructors did you end up with?

ANSWER: Forty-four.

STATEMENT: I didn't have one AWOL for three weeks before the landing, and no one failed to go with the force, nor failed to jump with the airborne unit.

[REDACTED]

ANSWER: Yes. Retalhuleu had 120 card-carrying Communists, including the Mayor. However, in an attempt to maintain security, I stopped all outgoing mail three weeks before the operation, and all incoming mail was stopped for seven days prior to the operation. Of course, these troops had a number of secret channels.

QUESTION: Was your camp adequate?

ANSWER: It could have been better, but it was adequate.

QUESTION: Why wasn't it possible to rehearse the amphibious landing?

ANSWER: We did have a partial rehearsal, but we couldn't bring the vessels to the Pacific side where our camp was for this would have meant bringing them through the Panama Canal.

QUESTION: I want to go back to the guerrillas. Who might have eluded capture?

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ANSWER: A number of men from most of the positions. All these men were given compass and map reading and other guerrilla training.

STATEMENT: To sum up the guerrilla situation then, there was no particular training directed toward it, as such, primarily because you had pretty good guerrillas to start with.

[REDACTED]: Yes, sir.

STATEMENT: Also, for morale reasons you had not briefed the entire force on the possibilities of having to take to the swamps as guerrillas. However, the day before the force left you did brief the commanders on guerrilla operations and the fact that you felt that the primary means of evacuation was sea-borne and airborne evacuation, and only if all other things failed would the force attempt to operate as guerrillas.

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: What would have been the consequences if, just before this invasion was launched, the men had been directed to conduct guerrilla type operations?

ANSWER: They probably would have revolted.

QUESTION: But I understood that they initially wanted to go in as guerrillas?

ANSWER: Yes, but we showed them the advantages of mass firepower, and I believe that they were convinced that the shock action against Castro's forces in meeting this firepower would cause the militia to break and run, and spark mass defections.

QUESTION: Then while the Cuban exiles originally wanted to conduct guerrilla operations they had been convinced that this was a rather unremunerative approach to the problem?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Where are the refugees being debriefed?

ANSWER: At Miami, Puerto Cabezas, Norfolk and Vieques.

STATEMENT: While we don't want to get into the matter in too much detail here, it seems that for historical reasons it would be a good thing if CIA would prepare an after action report on the over-all operation.

ANSWER: Yes, we are doing that.

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[REDACTED]

QUESTION: What would have happened if the operation had been called off after the first part of April?

[REDACTED]: It would have depended upon the posture they were in at the time. If it had been called off after they were actually on the way they would have taken over and kept going. I was informed that if the operation was called off they would take over. They said that as a friend we want you to direct all your people not to resist if this comes about, because we don't want anybody to get hurt. Consequently I had all our people turn in their side arms. I would say that after the 1st of April it was a go operation.

STATEMENT: With regard to the merchant ships that went into the beach-head area, let's determine just what orders were given to the ships and by whom. Also, let's look into [REDACTED]'s story about the fact that they were going to take ammunition into the beachhead area in an LCI, but by the time the operation could be undertaken it would have been daylight before they arrived, so the mission was cancelled.

MR. McGEORGE BUNDY

The Group reconvened at Mr. McGeorge Bundy's office at 1415. In attendance were:

GENERAL TAYLOR

MR. McGEORGE BUNDY

MR. KENNEDY

COMMANDER MITCHELL

MR. DULLES

LTCOLONEL TARWATER

(The notes of Mr. Bundy's interview have been replaced by the memorandum dated 4 May 1961.)

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 4, 1961

Dear General Taylor:

I regret to say that I am not satisfied with the account of our interview which appears in the Memorandum for Record submitted to me today by Colonel Walmsley. It seems to me that I can do a better job of presenting my views on this matter by sending you a memorandum covering my position on the points which are discussed in the Memorandum of Record.

The President on his entry into office was faced with a decision of disbanding or using the Cuban force in Guatemala. He was informed that the force must leave Guatemala within a limited time, and that it could not be held together in the United States for a long period. It would begin to deteriorate; its existence could not be kept quiet; and if it were disbanded within the United States the results would be damaging.

When the Cuba plan was initially presented to the President, he did not like the scheme for an amphibious landing. He requested that a plan be drawn for infiltration of the force so that it might emerge as a Cuban force already on Cuban territory. The report from CIA was that this notion was not likely to be successful, and instead the agency proposed a modified plan for an unopposed landing in a much less populated area. This was the Zapata Plan presented by Mr. Bissell in the middle of March 1961. As work on this plan progressed, the gradual impression developed that on balance the CIA preferred this plan to the original Trinidad Plan.

It was clearly understood that the Air battle should be won. The views of the Joint Chiefs were presented in writing, and while there was no clear discussion of the opinion of the Joint Chiefs

as to the relative merits of the two plans, I think these two statements are correct: (1) that there was no impression left that the Joint Chiefs as such preferred the Zapata Plan; (2) it was clearly understood that they had approved the plan and favored the operation on this revised basis. I base this statement upon the fact that the President repeatedly asked for the opinion of representatives of the Defense Department including members of the Joint Chiefs, and was invariably informed that the Defense Department favored the operation. I do not think this was merely a matter of "concurrence by attendance." The military certainly wanted the operation to proceed; I do not think that this was because of a deep conviction that this was the best possible plan -- it was rather that in view of the absence of desirable alternatives and the press of time, the military believed that the prospects were sufficiently favorable so that it would be best to go ahead. I would not wish to go further into detailed analysis of the motives or positions taken by the Joint Chiefs.

Success in this operation was always understood to be dependent upon an internal Cuban reaction. The first military phase would have been considered successful if it had established a beachhead that could be supplied effectively from outside and joined from inside by defecting Cubans. I do not think that the President was led to feel that the landing operation depended for its first success on immediate uprisings throughout Cuba. On the other hand, reports were made in the last few weeks that gave some hope that the chances of defections and uprisings were growing.

One of the serious misunderstandings in this operation, in my opinion, was over the practicability and likelihood of a guerrilla operation by the landing force. The President repeatedly indicated his own sense that this option was of great importance, and he was repeatedly assured that the guerrilla option was a real one. As one listening in the same way that he listened to most of the discussion before him, I was left with the clear impression that unless there was a quite unexpected catastrophe in the beaching process itself, a substantial portion of the force

would almost certainly be able to survive for a prolonged period in guerrilla operations. I do not think there was any extended discussion of the relative quality of the Zapata Plan as against the Trinidad from a guerrilla standpoint. There was a considerable discussion of the option of a sea evacuation, but I do not recall that there was a clear decision as to which of these secondary alternatives would be preferable. My point is simply that the President steadily insisted that the force have an alternative means of survival, and that he was steadily assured that such an alternative was present. As I recall it, the report of the Joint Staff on the Zapata Plan explicitly included assurances on the guerrilla option.

While it was recognized that the invasion force was much smaller than Castro's army, let alone his militia, the argument for landing it was that it would have much greater fire power, together with air supremacy, while the enemy would have to come toward the beach along narrow defiles. The invasion force would win the first battle because its soldiers were better fighters, with better equipment. After they had won this first battle, the balance would change; the will to fight of the Castro forces would be reduced; defections would begin; uprisings would occur in other parts of the island, and so on.

One startling omission, in retrospect, is the failure of any of the President's advisers to warn of the danger of the T-33s. I suspect that one reason for the later decision not to launch an air strike on the morning of D-Day was that this capability of the Castro air force was never put forward as significant.

While in retrospect I believe that too much attention was given to what General Taylor has called the question of "attribution," it certainly was believed that it would make a great political difference to have this force essentially Cuban. The Americans were offering moral, political and logistical support, but not battle forces. A question of shading is of course involved. At any rate, on March 29th or April 4th there was a direct statement by the President in a meeting that he wanted all U. S. forces out of the operation, and I recall no word of opposition to this decision at this meeting. Afterwards, there was further discussion, at

[REDACTED]

which I was not present, between the Department of Defense and the CIA, and agreed revisions were worked out. If those responsible for military judgment on the operation felt that the President's instructions were unacceptable, it seems to me that there certainly should have been some statements of this view.

In my meeting with General Taylor and his advisory group, I was asked about the decision not to permit an air strike by the Cuban invasion force early on Monday morning. This is a matter which arises from a conversation with the President and the Secretary of State, and I do not believe I am the right man to comment on it. I do have the recollection that during the presentation of the Zapata landings, the impression was conveyed to the President that there would be no strikes on D-Day that could not plausibly come from an airstrip in Cuba.

I have the general impression that all of those concerned with this operation were gradually put into an intrinsically unsound position because of the increasingly critical Cuban situation and the lack of desirable alternatives. Under these pressures the military planners, who had been given instructions by an earlier Administration, became advocates, rather than impartial evaluators of the problem. Moreover, I believe that many people were reticent in their representations to the President.

Mistakes were made in this operation by a lot of people whom the President had every right to trust, as a result of circumstances of all sorts. In the future, any such plan should have much more careful preparation and evaluation, and the President should have intelligence estimates presented to him by others than advocates. In the future also the President should have an explicit White House review, so that he can have an independent judgment, especially on points of interdepartmental responsibility.

I do not concur in any judgment that this operation was "run from the White House." What happened was rather that as trouble began to develop after D-Day, there was steady pressure

on the President for a relaxation of rules which had previously been made, and in the light of changing circumstances some such relaxations were authorized. Only in the case of the decision on Sunday with respect to the D-Day strike was there an operational modification that restricted, instead of enlarging, the authorizations to the CIA. This, as I have said, is a matter on which others can comment more effectively than I. Nevertheless, I would agree that the rules of action should be more clearly stated in the future, and responsibility delegated within those rules to a man near the scene of action. I regard this as a somewhat academic point, because I doubt very much whether large-scale operations of this sort can or should be "covert."

I accept as accurate the statement of my views which runs from the middle of page 13 through the middle of page 14, and I specifically endorse the comment attributed to me that if the military had said at any time that calling off or modifying the air strikes would cause the operation to fail -- or even damage it severely -- the President would have reversed any such decision as that on Sunday.

McGeorge Bundy
McGeorge Bundy

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

and evaluation as to whether or not it will be effective.

Furthermore, the President should have intelligence estimates presented to him by others than advocates.

QUESTION: What about interdepartmental cooperation.

ANSWER: I wouldn't be a good judge of this. However, I wouldn't become involved in such a plan again without knowing what the interdepartmental cooperation was. In the future the President should have an explicit White House review. He should hear something from other than advocates.

QUESTION: Would it have been feasible to let the DOD handle the operation, say, with CINCLANT running it with a POLAD alongside and operating within established parameters. Would it be better to have it run this way or to have it run from the White House.

ANSWER: I don't think we controlled the operation from the White House.

RESPONSE: The messages make it appear that it was very close to this. Was this desirable.

ANSWER: I think it would have been better to set forth more clearly established parameters and then delegate the responsibility.

STATEMENT: My own judgment is that while this is important from the lessons that can be learned, I don't think it was just one thing that caused the failure of this operation. I think there are a number of lessons to be learned: (1) If you take on the political risks of this sort of an operation you must succeed big and quick. I think the concept of possibly starting a prolonged civil war might have been more damaging than the defeat we suffered. (2) I think that in a new administration everyone must make an unusual effort to overcome their natural reticence in the presence of the President and be completely frank with him. (3) The obsession with secrecy made for a less careful study of the plan than would have otherwise been made. I think there were a number of reasons that led both the CIA and the military to become advocates rather than impartial judges of the plan.

(5) I think the quality of the estimates of Castro's forces was a serious factor. For example, their operational doctrine was estimated to be virtually nonexistent, and yet they seemed to have a very clear understanding of the value of control of the air. (6) I don't think we worked hard enough to advise the President and I am not sure that all of us felt we were his advisors on this project. (7) I think the misunderstanding of the likelihood of the requirement for guerrilla operations was serious. (8) We exaggerated the necessity to do something with the Guatemala force. (9) As I reflect on the covertness of this operation, I'm amazed that we thought there was a chance of deniability. (10) I think the men that worked on this got into a world of their own. I don't believe the failure was "because of the want of a nail."

QUESTION: What about the desirability of using U. S. advisors in Cuba as we did in Korea?

ANSWER: If there were Americans in the land force the President was misled and I'd have been against it.

GENERAL TAYLOR: I don't believe the military view, such as held by [REDACTED], was strongly presented to the President.

MR. KENNEDY: People that actually have to carry the operation through don't have access to the President.

MR. BUNDY: I had the strong feeling that if the military had said that calling off the air strikes would have caused the operation to fail the President would have reversed his decision.

MR. DULLES: One thing I'm not clear on is whether or not the forces encountered by the invasion force were Castro's elite. Actually I blame myself a bit on the guerrilla thing. I think we were misled by the fact that Zapata was a traditional guerrilla area, because the only real course of action in the event the operation didn't succeed was sea evacuation.

MR. BUNDY: I think there was nothing wrong with the organization, as such. I believe that failure resulted from the failures to give the President the help he needed.

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2 May 1961 - Eighth Meeting

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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

PARAMILITARY STUDY GROUP MEETING

AT THE PENTAGON

EIGHTH MEETING

2 MAY 1961

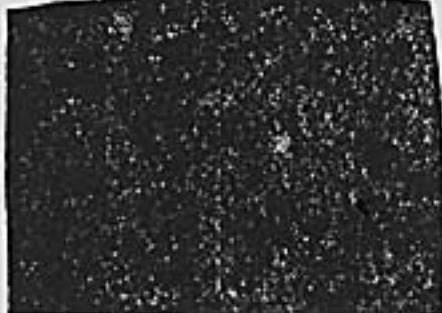
PRESENT

GENERAL TAYLOR

MR. KENNEDY

MR. DULLES

GENERAL LANSDALE



COLONEL KINARD

MR. KING

COMMANDER MITCHELL

LT COLONEL TARWATER

The following notes are not a verbatim record, but represent the general substance of the statement made [REDACTED]

The first person to appear before the Group was [REDACTED] who had been aboard the BARBARA J. He stated that their mission on the BARBARA J. was to escort the HUSTON, to provide beach markings, and to provide gunfire support for the troops at Red Beach. He further stated that the BARBARA J. was armed with nine .50 cal. machine guns, three .30 cal. machine guns, and several other .30 cal. automatic weapons.

STATEMENT: We were due to arrive at Red Beach at 0100 and we arrived there at 0115. The weather was fine and everything was just fine for the landing. I went in with the beach marking crew. We met no enemy resistance in marking the right side of the beach.

QUESTION: Did you run into any coral?

ANSWER: Yes, but we had only minor difficulty with it.

STATEMENT: After marking the right side of the beach we moved over to the left side. When we were about 40 yards offshore they opened fire on us with what I believe were a number of small automatic weapons. We engaged them with our .50 cal. machine gun and our .30 cal. machine gun which were mounted on our boat. We never got the second marker light set. However, I provided the marking by blinking with my hand flashlight and it worked all right. They got in O. K. When the troops went ashore there was a lot of firing. About 50 militia came out of the city. They apparently had been there on a vacation. They didn't turn out the lights in the village, which was rather dimly lighted, and there was a huge construction project south on the west side of the beach that had extremely bright lights burning. Within 20 minutes after the landing six or seven trucks started from the construction project with armed men aboard. I called in fire from the BARBARA J. and the first burst of .50 cal. and 75 mm shells hit the truck column and stopped it. We were later told that the men aboard the trucks dropped their guns and ran, believing that we were part of a major sea invasion force. After I was engaged the commander of Red Beach departed with about two-thirds of his craft because he felt that

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
he should get ashore as soon as possible. Each of these men had 96 rounds of ammunition, plus about 80 rounds of additional ammunition. On the second trip back to the beach I received machine gun fire from the left flank and one of the men in my boat was killed. Then I heard some explosions which I believed were incoming mortars or possibly 80 mm artillery.

QUESTION: Were you visible on the water?

ANSWER: No, sir, the moon was gone.

STATEMENT: About an hour before daylight I noticed that the movement ashore wasn't progressing. I didn't hear any boats moving. I heard that the HUSTON was having trouble with her boats, so I got two rubber boats from the BARBARA J. and went over to the HUSTON and found eight aluminum craft tied on the opposite side of the ship not being used. It was the 5th Battalion Commander's responsibility to get the men from the Huston ashore. However, he wasn't in any hurry and he didn't want me to take the boats and men in. Anyway we started ashore. As we were moving in it was gray, just at first daylight, about 0600. About this time a B-26 came at us on the deck firing at us with his .50 cal. machine guns. On his first pass we didn't have time to do much but duck, but on the next pass, since we had a .50 cal. and a .30 cal. machine gun and four BARs aboard, I decided that rather than just be shot at we should shoot back. On the next pass we fired at him and he wounded one of my men. However, on the third pass when he passed over he came so close that we could feel the propwash, but after he passed over he started smoking, and we later heard that he had crashed. Immediately following this first B-26 another came in making firing passes. Then our C-46s came in with our paratroopers and they had two of our B-26 aircraft flying cover. Following this a Sea Fury came in. He fired rockets and strafed the HUSTON and the BARBARA J. and these two ships, with most of the 5th Battalion and supplies aboard, moved out six miles.

QUESTION: Why weren't the ships unloaded?

ANSWER: Because of the press of time.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

QUESTION: Why do you think you were unable to unload during the time you had?

ANSWER: Possibly we were a little overoptimistic in our planning and possibly because of the complete darkness.

QUESTION: How much tonnage did you have to go ashore?

ANSWER: I don't know exactly in terms of tonnage. However, we had a 10-day supply for the Red Beach personnel.

RESPONSE: That's a lot of boat trips.

ANSWER: Yes, sir. Of course, it would have worked if Castro's aircraft hadn't showed up.

STATEMENT: After we'd pulled out six miles we started back in. However, about that time a jet aircraft came in and fired two rockets into the HUSTON and two rockets into the BARBARA J. He split the seam on the BARBARA J. and we started taking water and the HUSTON reported no steerage and was heading in toward the beach. We directed that the HUSTON put its engines in reverse and told them that then we'd tow them out. However, the HUSTON had started to sink and he was under attack by a B-26, and there was gas on the water, so the Captain ran the HOUSTON aground about 50 to 75 yards offshore and all the men jumped off in their life jackets. About 45 minutes after the grounding I received word that approximately 170 men from the HUSTON wanted to be evacuated. However, we had orders to rejoin the fleet because it was under air attack. So I told the men from the HUSTON to consolidate and wait. I told them that they couldn't count on us to evacuate them, but that we would resupply them, and transport them. I told them they should try to rejoin the troops on Red Beach. I then asked them to describe their position, and told them that we'd air drop some equipment and supplies to them. They described their position and stated they also wanted boats so that they could get some supplies off the HUSTON which they could take into Red Beach. About a half an hour after this communication Castro's aircraft started to attack the HUSTON again. I believe they may have intercepted the message which described the men's position and talked about the supplies aboard the HUSTON.

[REDACTED]

STATEMENT: On D-Day a brave thing happened. One of our two B-26s was shot down and the other one was out of ammunition and yet he asked what he could do to help. I asked him if he would circle us and run a bluff to keep Castro's aircraft away. He did this until he had only enough gas to get back to base with a 15 minutes fuel reserve.

QUESTION: You could have evacuated these men if you had been ordered to do so?

ANSWER: Yes, sir. However, the intent was for these men to join up with the rest of the force at Red Beach.

STATEMENT: At this point we were ordered to go out 13 miles and wait until night. We started out with the ATLANTICO, CARIBE, BLAGAR, and the LCUs. As we moved out we were under attack by a B-26 and a Sea Fury. The B-26 was shot down.

QUESTION: How many men got ashore at Red Beach?

ANSWER: Two hundred seventy out of 399.

QUESTION: How much ammunition did they have?

ANSWER: Enough for two days of fire.

QUESTION: Is this all they had with them - their rifles and this ammunition?

ANSWER: No, they had four 81 mm mortars, four light machine guns, some 57 mm recoilless rifles, some grenades and some BARs.

QUESTION: They shouldn't have run out of ammunition on D-Day, should they?

ANSWER: No, they must have wasted their ammunition.

STATEMENT: I'm troubled by the fact that all you had to unload your supplies with were these small boats.

RESPONSE: Yes, sir, but all the materials were packaged so that they could be handled by one man. We just formed a chain gang to unload the packages and brought a boat up alongside.

QUESTION: This procedure would have tied up a lot of men, wouldn't it?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

GENERAL TAYLOR: I would like to state my understanding now, so that the record will be clear. The order was given to withdraw all the ships from the beach area on D-Day at about 2:00 P.M. The order was for all the ships to rendezvous about 13 miles offshore. You and the LCUs stayed in the convoy, but went beyond the 13-mile rendezvous point before you stopped, and the CARIBEE and the ATLANTICO took off and disappeared. You actually stopped about 7:00 P.M., which meant you had been steaming about four hours at six knots, so you should have been about 24 to 30 miles out. Is that correct?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Having reached this area, you then on your own initiative started loading the LCUs with supplies from the BARBARA J. You were about two-thirds through when you got the orders to turn around and go in again.

RESPONSE: Exactly, sir. The message came from Washington at about 2000 or 2100. It directed the B-J to go in with a 500-man pack. The BLAGAR was to come in with the slower LCUs. However, the BARBARA J. was leaking and all the 500-man packs were aboard the BLAGAR, so it was decided that the BLAGAR would go in with the packs, with the B-J and the LCUs following. However, there was about a four-hour delay before the ships were ready to go in.

QUESTION: What caused the delay?

ANSWER: I don't know, sir. The BLAGAR was to pick me up and it didn't pick me up until 10:30.

QUESTION: The BLAGAR did start in then at about midnight, and did the B-J and the LCUs follow?

ANSWER: I don't know. We steamed toward the beach, however, until about 4:00 A.M., when we were ordered to turn around.

QUESTION: What was the speed of the BLAGAR?

ANSWER: Ten knots.

RESPONSE: Well, at 10 knots for four hours, it would seem that you could have made the beach.

QUESTION: Did you have an order to turn around and, if so, who sent it?

ANSWER: I don't know exactly what happened, but whatever happened, happened so naturally that I was not disturbed. I was a little fuzzy at this time as I had been up for four days and four nights.

QUESTION: Did you here in Washington know of the order to resupply the beaches?

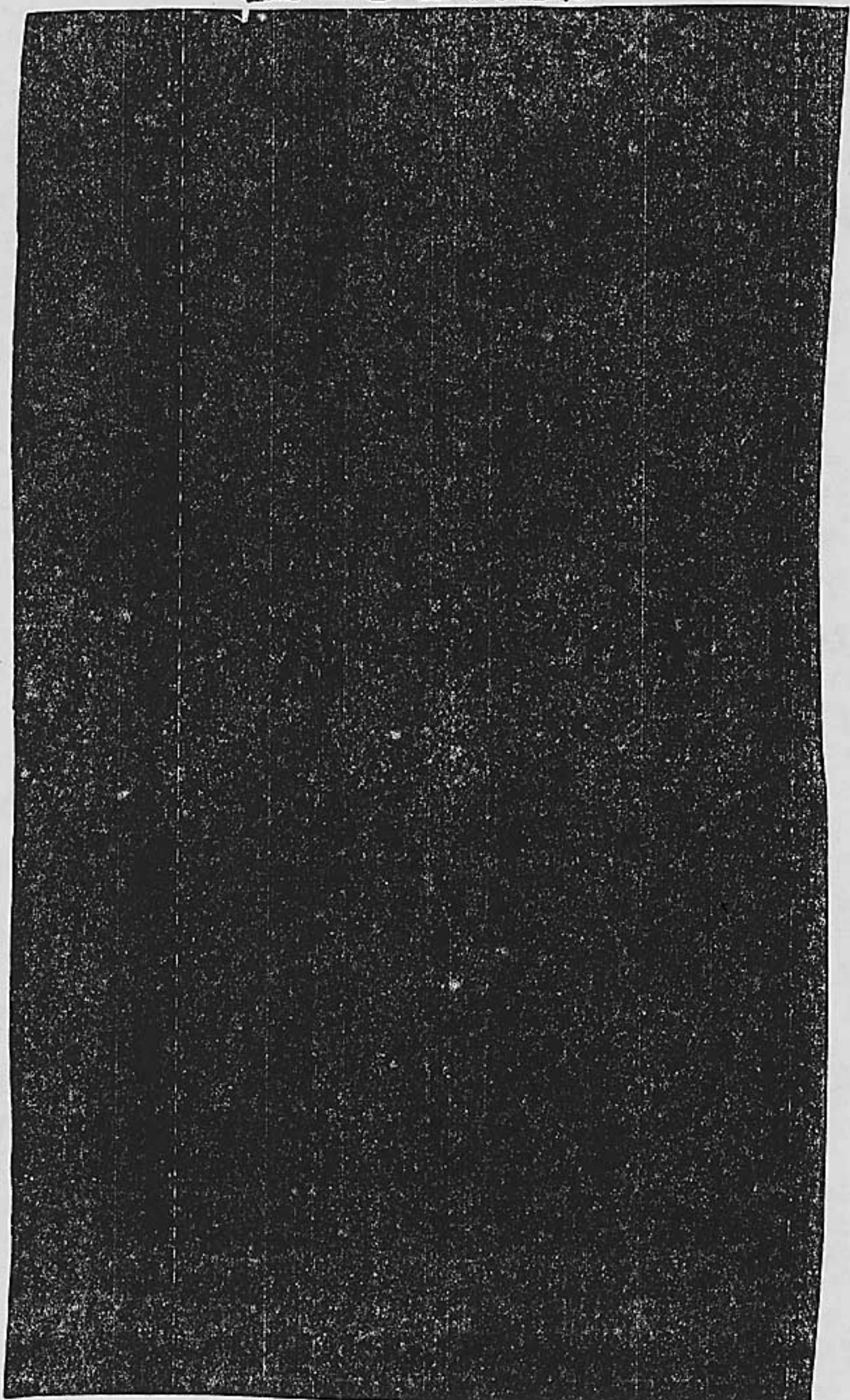
MR. KING: Yes. It was a surprise to us to learn that they hadn't been supplied. We didn't know that the CARIBE and the ATLANTICO had taken off.

QUESTION: Do you recall when you realized that the beach supplies had not been received?

MR. KING: After dawn the next day.

After additional discussion with [REDACTED], it was decided that he should write a chronology of the events and submit it to the Group for further study.

[REDACTED] was responsible for the communications plan for the operation. In making his presentation he utilized several charts showing the communications nets and agreed to provide the Study Group with desk size copies for their records.



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

QUESTION: How were the messages that came into Washington handled?

ANSWER: They were immediately seen by [REDACTED] who made any tactical decisions that may have been necessary. If they involved higher level decisions, [REDACTED], Mr. Bissell or Mr. Cabell would take the message to the State Department or the White House.

QUESTION: Was there a routine sending of messages to the State Department or the White House?

ANSWER: No, only on special issues as determined by the higher-ups.

MR. KENNEDY: I'd like to get all the messages that were sent out from Washington and those that arrived, plus all the coded messages.

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: What would you change if you had it to do over again?

ANSWER: I don't think I'd change anything,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

At this point [REDACTED] left and [REDACTED] was recalled in an attempt to clarify what had developed after the ships had been ordered out on D-Day. Recalling these events, [REDACTED] covered much the same ground as [REDACTED] and he did relatively little to clarify the chronology. However, he did add one new point when he stated that he may have given Pepe the impression that the Navy air CAP would come in and stay for the duration of the operation rather than advising him that the Navy air CAP would only be provided for one hour. He stated that this had been his honest impression, and that he had not purposely mislead Pepe. However, in fact, he had given Pepe the wrong impression.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

At this point [REDACTED] left and [REDACTED], the skipper of the BLAGAR, appeared before the Group. After a few introductory remarks he was asked whether or not it was possible that the ships of the invasion force had been sighted by the lighthouse. He replied that it was entirely possible, stating that he had seen the lighthouse very clearly. Much of [REDACTED]'s testimony was essentially the same as that of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Consequently, only those portions of his statements have been included that contain new or differing information.

STATEMENT: We picked up the crew of the RIO ESCONDIDO and they rather demoralized our crew so that we had something of a mutiny aboard ship, in that they refused to go back to the beach again. However, I talked to them and pointed out that there were 1200 men on the beach and we were only 60 and that we had to try and help them.

QUESTION: When did you leave the beach?

ANSWER: About 10:00 A.M. I sent the message to take all the ships out to sea and give them protection. I had to get the ships off the beach for there was no maneuverability and we had to go slow, five and a half knots. After we got away from the beach I called the ships to join together, but only the B-J returned. At about this time my blue net went out and I had to conduct my communications through the BARBARA J. I used my green net to work with the BARBARA J. During this period we kept steaming south toward Point Zulu where we had been ordered to rendezvous. While enroute someone down in the engine room from the RIO ESCONDIDO tried to stop the engines of the ship. Again I tried to explain the situation to the men from the ESCONDIDO and five of my own men as to the requirement for our getting supplies to the men on the beach.

QUESTION: Were any Americans involved in the group that were refusing to go back in?

ANSWER: No.

STATEMENT: After I had talked to these men we continued on, but I could not find the whereabouts of the ATLANTICO or the CARIBE. Later I found out that they could hear me, but they would not answer. Finally they showed up at Point Zulu on the 18th of April at about 1600.

QUESTION: Did everything you wanted to send back to Florida have to go through the BARBARA J.?

ANSWER: No, I had my own wireless to Florida.

QUESTION: What messages did you receive?

STATEMENT: The first message I received directed me to steam out of the Bay and stand by. The second message directed me to go to Zulu, and the third message directed me to go to Charley-Charley, a point further south.

QUESTION: On the first night was there any discussion relative to sending in supplies?

ANSWER: Yes, sir, but we were at Charley-Charley and the message came in too late, at about 2400. Prior to this, however, I had steamed around Point Charley-Charley and unloaded the B-J into the LCUs.

QUESTION: When did the ATLANTICO and the CARIBE get back?

ANSWER: About 1600 on D+1.

QUESTION: Did you unload the ATLANTICO?

ANSWER: Yes, but not the CARIBE.

QUESTION: When did you get the order to load the LCUs and go back in?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

ANSWER: During the day of D+1 before the ATLANTICO and the CARIBE got back.

MR. KENNEDY: The decision to permit a daylight cargo run was made at about 1400.

QUESTION: When did you finish loading the LCUs?

ANSWER: About 2230.

STATEMENT: We were ready to go about 2300. As we headed back in I sent a message that unless we got support we couldn't go in in daylight. I requested air cover. I never got a reply to my request for air cover. However, later on, while steaming north I got a message not to go in, that I should remain out at sea.

STATEMENT: Following this on D+2 there was talk about evacuation so I formed two convoys, one with my ship and the two merchant ships, and one with the BARBARA J. and the LCUs. I steamed full speed ahead toward Blue Beach and sent a message at the same time requesting permission to go in. I gave Pepe an ETA of about 1630. However, Pepe said that it was too late. In the meantime, I got a message to lay off 15 miles to help evacuate. Later on I got word that the evacuation was cancelled. I was about 30 miles out from the beach heading north when the evacuation was cancelled. Later I received orders to go back to Charley-Charley with the LCUs and some of us got orders to go to Stock Island in Florida. I don't know where all the other ships went, but we set our course for Florida. Following this they asked me if I could take my ship back to Stock Island with only the Americans aboard for a crew. When I replied in the negative they told me to go to Vieques.

QUESTION: Do you have any suggestions on how this operation might have been done better?

ANSWER: Well, I think if we'd had LSDs we could have unloaded right out the front instead of with little boats as we tried to do. Oh, and the beach wasn't the best. We lost two LCVPs in the first landing we made. Another thing, a man should get a ship, not one of those things we had. I'd like to have had something like a Coast Guard cutter. Also, we had a lot of explosives and ammunition aboard. I don't know if that was advisable.

[REDACTED]

GENERAL LANSDALE

At this point [REDACTED] left and General Lansdale appeared before the Group.

QUESTION: What part did you play in this operation?

ANSWER: I was a Deputy to General Erskine and we had a small component that furnished support to the CIA. Our first real action was last March when we obtained a radio transmitter and helped get it and other facilities installed on Swan Island. We also arranged for the use of Fort Sherman for training troops. From then on I continued in the support role up until December when the Willauer Group came into being. It was shortly after this, in January, I believe, when the JCS and General Gray became involved in the plan and our office essentially became a monitoring agency. Then I was gone for a month and when I came back I was made a personal Assistant to Mr. McNamara on much of this. We were getting supplies for the operation and making facilities available - that sort of thing.

QUESTION: Did you attend Special Group meetings?

ANSWER: I attended two as Assistant to Mr. Douglas.

QUESTION: Did you see enough of the planning to discuss how it went?

ANSWER: First, I'd like to say that I am not a Monday morning quarterback. However, I expressed some comments that it seemed to me that they should do more to get a popular base for the operation. For many valid reasons, however, the decision was made that this was not necessary. From then on we tried to support the operation in every way that we could.

QUESTION: Do you believe that the Department of Defense evaluation and support came into the picture soon enough?

ANSWER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Was the State Department brought in on the operation soon enough?

ANSWER: That's difficult for me to say. However, I believe that the general concept had agreement from State, although they

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

objected to certain specific details.

QUESTION: Should this kind of an operation be assigned to CIA, or should the responsibility be split, or should the DOD do it all?

ANSWER: I think there should be a more clear line of command. However, I don't think it matters who is in command so long as the person is competent. I believe that this particular operation should have been handled by CIA. However, it was coming close to one that should have been handled by the DOD. Essentially I believe that there should be one leader for an operation. All activity should be under one leader with specialists from each of the other agencies and departments as required. I believe this could probably be handled by an ad hoc committee.

QUESTION: You are really saying that there should be a task force of representatives of various agencies with one leader?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: How would your concept differ from what is being done now?

ANSWER: It would be tasking by a leader who would have subordinate leaders. Furthermore, I would have a means of calling to the attention of the President situations that couldn't be handled by the ordinary machinery of the Government.

MR. KENNEDY: I think we have to come up with some sort of a plan so that we can take actions before the situations develop to the point where it is almost certain that we'll get licked.

GENERAL LANSDALE: You have to establish a method for surfacing the best views on what to do about a situation and get these views before the President.

MR. KENNEDY: What we need is a mechanism that's continually in operation in the Government determining what we are going to do all over the world. We shouldn't just wait until the crisis is upon us.

GENERAL TAYLOR: I disagree with the ad hoc task force concept, but we must have a national pattern for handling these situations.

GENERAL LANSDALE: In developing a military capability in the

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
various nations of the world, I believe you have to start on a political base. The people in the country concerned must feel that they have something worth fighting for and we must use the local people.

QUESTION: Do you agree that it is not sound to isolate paramilitary activities from the rest of the cold war?

ANSWER: Yes, it is only part of the cold war.

COLONEL KINARD

At this point General Lansdale left and Colonel Kinard appeared before the Group to give a briefing on Special Forces. In his briefing he explained that Special Forces participated in unconventional and psychological warfare. He explained that unconventional warfare consisted of three parts: (1) Guerrilla action, (2) Evasion and escape, and (3) Subversion. He stated that our Special Force units are trained to organize indigenous personnel in conducting unconventional warfare. He further stated that at the present time there are three basic Special Force units, one in Okinawa with 364 officers and men; one at Bad Toltz, Germany, with 346 officers and men; and one at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, with 1,100 officers and men. He stated that the equipment is now standardized for these units. Members of the Special Force units are all airborne qualified and, in addition, have atomic demolition capabilities. He stated that there is a back-up of Special Forces in the Reserve and the National Guard. The Reserves have 1,456 officers and men authorized and 1,000 in being. In the National Guard there are 938 officers and men.

QUESTION: How is the re-enlistment rate?

ANSWER: Good. Some of our men have served in all of the three units.

Colonel Kinard then gave a description of the psychological warfare battalions and the loud-speaker and leaflet companies. He stated that at the present time they have psychological warfare elements in both Europe and the Pacific.

QUESTION: Suppose we wanted to put unconventional warfare units in Viet-Nam at this time?

ANSWER: This would not be difficult. We have been training people in Southeast Asia, including Viet-Nam, over the last six years.

At this point members of the Paramilitary Study Group had to excuse themselves to attend another meeting and Col. Kinard was invited to return the following day.

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3 May 1961 - Ninth Meeting

[REDACTED]

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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

PARAMILITARY STUDY GROUP MEETING

AT THE PENTAGON

NINTH MEETING

3 MAY 1961

PRESENT

GENERAL TAYLOR

MR. McNAMARA

MR. KENNEDY

GENERAL WHEELER

MR. DULLES

GENERAL BONESTEEL

ADMIRAL BURKE

[REDACTED]
COLONEL KINARD

MR. KING

COMMANDER MITCHELL

LT COLONEL TARWATER

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
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(The following notes are not a verbatim report, but represent the general substance of the statements made.)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

At this point [REDACTED] left and [REDACTED] appeared before the Group. [REDACTED] was in charge of the Foreign Intelligence Section which was concerned with reports, research, economic support, foreign intelligence operations, debriefings, State Department liaison.

QUESTION: What was your general impression of conditions within Cuba prior to the invasion with regard to uprisings?

ANSWER: It was my opinion that if the people do not get arms they would not rise.

STATEMENT: In a meeting with Mr. Devine he mentioned the President's statement that no Americans would be used in the Cuban operation. He then asked me what I thought would happen if the operation was turned over to the Cubans. I told him I thought that they would clobber the hell out of the invasion force.

QUESTION: In your debriefings of significant sources, before the operation, did you detect any readiness on the part of the population to rise?

ANSWER: Yes. For example, from a U.S. businessman who traveled throughout the country I had indication that there were relatively small bands that were ready to rise.

STATEMENT: If an invasion of this sort had taken place in January when there was active resistance in the Escambrays there might have been a better chance of uprisings. However, in my estimation there was less likelihood of uprisings in April.

QUESTION: Was there any evidence of tightening up before the invasion?

ANSWER: Yes. They were tightening up before D-Day and then they really clamped down on D-Day.

QUESTION: The Press said that there had been no call to the Cubans to rise against Castro. Is that true?

ANSWER: We certainly didn't put out any call to rise for that would have been the worst thing to do. We wouldn't put out any call for the people to rise until there was something solid for them to rise to.

QUESTION: How many Soviet-Bloc personnel were in Cuba at the time of the invasion?

ANSWER: Nine hundred eighty-one with about two to three hundred military advisors included in that number.